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MAXIMUMROCK~ROLL

CONSTANT MONGREL | BEOČIN, SERBIA SCENE REPORT
RUBY KARINTO | NOT DEAD YET FEST | DAMAK

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Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

PETER AVERY

NEUROTIC FICTION – Pulp Music LP
MOPE GROOVES – The Waves LP
FATTY CAKES AND THE PUFF PASTRIES – LP
L.O.X. – L.O.X. Time LP
GREAT AMERICAN HOUSE FIRE – 12"
PIG DNA – Strong Throat / A.U.A.H.
MODERN GOON – EP
BOOJI BOYS – Weekend Rocker LP
BYSTANDER – Bystander EP
DENIM & LEATHER – LP

MATT BADENHOP

BOOTLICKER – EP
CHRONIC SUBMISSION – LP
EXIT ORDER – live
FREAK GENES – Qwak Qwak LP
GEE TEE – LP
IMPOTENTIE – EP
KOVAA RASVAA – 12"
OND TRO – Støv LP
THE SLEEPERS – EP
U-NIX – Nuke Portland LP

HEATHER BLOTTO

KOVAA RASVAA – 12"
DESEOS PRIMITIVOS – Existir EP
SISTER DISASTER – Away LP
NEUROTIC FICTION – Pulp Music LP
WASTE MAN – CS
ZAD KOKAR & LES COMBI BEYAZ – tape
VIOLENCE CREEPS – EP
PUHELENSEKSI –12"
FATTY CAKES AND THE PUFF PASTRIES – LP
ISS – LP

MITCH CARDWELL

CARBONAS – 2xLP
L.O.X. – L.O.X. Time LP
VANILLA POPPERS – EP
SPRAY PAINT & THE REBEL – 12"
PIG DNA – Strong Throat / A.U.A.H.
U-NIX – Nuke Portland LP
DOTS – live
DESEOS PRIMITIVOS – Existir EP
VIOLENCE CREEPS – EP
ISS – LP

VICKY CASSIS

EXIT ORDER – live
BRAVE HANDS – LP
ZETA – Magia Infinita LP
KHIIS – live
DUMP HIM – CS
PUHELENSEKSI –12"
FATTY CAKES AND THE PUFF PASTRIES – LP
YOUR PEST BAND – LP
SOAR – live
WASTE MAN – CS

ROBERT COLLINS

KOVAA RASVAA – 12"
DIRTY WOMBS – LP
KAKAFONI – Krälar I Stoftet LP
ZETA – Magia Infinita LP
EXIT ORDER – live
DESTRIPADOS – Gutless LP
RATTUS INVICTUS – live
U-NIX – Nuke Portland LP
DEADWITCH – LP
V/A – Raise Your Voice Joyce LP

JOAN DETORO

PIG DNA – Strong Throat / A.U.A.H.
VANILLA POPPERS – EP
SHITTY LIFE – LP
U-NIX – Nuke Portland LP
CELL – Contempt EP
PISSE – EP
ZETA – Magia Infinita LP
SCREAMING FIST – live
DESEOS PRIMITIVOS – Existir EP
EXIT ORDER – live

MIRANDA FISHER

L.O.X. – L.O.X. Time LP
FREAK GENES – Qwak Qwak LP
ISS – LP
CELL – Contempt EP
DESEOS PRIMITIVOS – Existir EP
COLOR TV – LP
SHITTY LIFE – LP
VANILLA POPPERS – EP
MAMA – Eye in the Sky EP
THE WHIFFS – Take a Whiff LP

LAYLA GIBBON

FREAK GENES – Qwak Qwak LP
L.O.X. – L.O.X. Time LP
PIG DNA – Strong Throat / A.U.A.H.
CARBONAS – 2xLP
NEUROTIC FICTION – Pulp Music LP
SPRAY PAINT & THE REBEL – 12"
VIOLENCE CREEPS – EP
DATENIGHT – 45
CRACK CLOUD – LP
U-NIX – Nuke Portland LP

GREG HARVESTER

PIG DNA – Strong Throat / A.U.A.H.
GRP TXT – live
MAMA – Eye in the Sky EP
VANILLA POPPERS – EP
CRUZ SOMERS – Sit and Stare EP
NEO NEOS / ERIK NERVOUS – split EP
NO BLUES – LP
GEE TEE – LP
NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – LP
BOOJI BOYS – Weekend Rocker LP

KENNY KAOS

THE HIVEMINDS – 45
GIUDA – Number 10 / Crazee
DATENIGHT – 45
NIXON NOW – The Now Sound LP
FIRST BASE – Not That Bad LP
THE BRIEFS – 45
STRAIGHT ARROWS – 45
CARBONAS – 2xLP
THE WHIFFS – Take a Whiff LP
ROMSKIP – EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

Lost at sea...

RAY LUJAN

BRAVE HANDS – LP
THE BRIEFS – 45 / SEX TOURISTS – LP
FASHIONISM – Smash Singles LP
FIRST BASE – Not That Bad LP
FREAK GENES – Qwak Qwak LP
THE HECTOR COLLECTORS – LP
MAMA – Eye in the Sky EP
NEUROTIC FICTION – Pulp Music LP
NIXON NOW – The Now Sound LP
NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS – live

FRED SCHRUNK

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This is a contributor-driven magazine. We need help writing reviews, editing, doing layouts, processing mail, maintaining our archive, and more.

Wanna be a shitworker?
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Below is a list of some of the many non-US distributors that currently carry *MRR*. We do our best to cover as much territory outside of the US that we can, but we still want to distribute to more parts of the world.

MRR has access to some of the lowest international postal rates offered by the USPS. If you have a distro, want to sell *MRR* at shows, or just want to get cheaper copies for friends by buying wholesale, email distro@maximumrocknroll.com for more details.

European distributors should get in touch with Specialist Subject for wholesale and subscriptions in in Europe: specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk.

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We will not accept ads from major labels or bands with exclusive distribution through major-owned distros. Information about advertising can be found at maximumrocknroll.com/ads.

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The life and death of the Underground Disco.

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How To Be Au Courant In These Confusing & Modern Times

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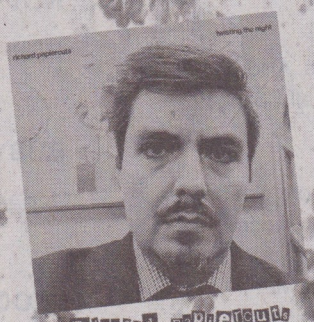


Richard Edpierce
Twisting The Night EP

PREENING
Skeletal Fibbe
7"

https://evernever-records.bandcamp.com/

LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

I'm writing in response to the Belgian scene report that was featured last issue. Specifically, the first band mentioned wears KKK attire??? Like, this all-white band puts this shit on their cover art too, it's their central theme. This is apparently some form of satire, but this is *MRR* and not South Park. Part of me thinks there's some honesty to including the flaws of a scene, as this band seems to be popular. Or maybe *MRR* should be more intentional about what's printed. By including this band, who are we excluding?

I'm white so I'm not someone to lead conversations against white supremacy, and people of all backgrounds should speak out in this magazine (write a letter or column, there aren't enough!) But it should not always be up to POC to do the emotional labor of deconsaructing white supremacy, so here are some reasons why y'all should grow from your mistakes and end this band:

White supremacy has not ended, and all white people benefit from and replicate its existence. That includes people in countries where there wasn't a KKK. To quote bell hooks; "When liberal whites fail to understand how they can and / or do embody white supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination (especially domination that involves coercive control), they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they wish to see eradicated." This recognition is a crucial step in combating internalized racism. To play around with antiquated images of racial violence is to separate yourself from racism. But none of us are separate from the racism we've been taught since birth, we have simply repackaged its methods and results.

Also, in the supposed context of humor, it is not a white person's place to use this imagery. There is a different level of reality that this violence has for white people vs. black and brown people. It's much easier to laugh at something when it has not harmed your community. Having KKK uniforms praised as "quirky" or whatever within this magazine translates into who gets to feel comfortable reading it. This problem is extremely relevant to *MRR*!

I hope we can continue the efforts at *MRR* to combat oppressive patterns that have always been within its pages. Making decisions more collectively among people of diverse experiences is an exciting and important step. That would better inform who this magazine is created for.

To the band, if this still does not make sense, I urge you to consult people in your community doing work against white supremacy. If you don't have access to these people, read authors who confront white supremacy in their writing (bell hooks, Angela Davis, etc.) Obviously someone else could've said this better, but I just didn't want to see that shit go unchallenged.

GG Allin is dead
—Hungry Kat

Dear *MRR*:

I have been a reader + usually a subscriber of *MRR* since 1991.

I can very vividly recall the first issue that I picked up and how much it changed my life; a vst world of underground music and writing, in the form of 7" vinyl, zines, and pen pals, was opened up to me. I had been listening to punk for years, but only the biggest names with the best distribution were avilalble to me via mainstream record stores in my small town, until then. With a copy of *MRR* in my hands, I suddenly had access to hundreds of records and tapes, weird zines of various flavors, and pen pals across the world. My mailbox became a source of overflowing happiness and excitement in my life, and getting home to read my mail was often the highlight of my day. Unfortunately, the utility of *MRR* has diminished so much over the last decade or so that I frequently question the value of my subscription, and new issues often sit unread for weeks. However, I believe some small changes would restore *MRR* to being the beacon that it once was.

The primary aspect that troubles me is that it is very difficult to access and obtain anything covered in your zine without being redirected to the internet. Most reviews, ads, and articles point the reader to a URL or social media address. This makes no sense to me, because *MRR* is a paper publication that I pay to receive in the mail; it is not a blog or social media account—I cannot "click" these links. *MRR* requires the reader to put aside their copy of the zine, open a web browser, and load something off the net. To me, this is absurd. I pay to receive *MRR* in the mail because I desire an alternative to "social media punk." I want to buy physical records + zines, which is why I subscribe to a physical publication, rather than just browse bandcamp (which I could do for free). Requiring the reader to go to an internet address puts a corporate middleman, unnecessarily, between the reader and the "artist. I suspect that this has contributed to the decline of *MRR* readership over the years because it changes *MRR* from being a source of access to a real underground culture into being an auxiliary source of information that is on the internet + can be easily browsed without the need of *MRR*. How is *MRR* more useful to the reader than Etsy or some blog that can be read for free? Is *MRR* more than a giant advertisement for bandcamp?

Obtaining *MRR* is also much more difficult for me than it ever was in the '90s, and doing so requires me to have something I do not want: a bank account. *MRR* subscriptions used to be obtainable by sending well-concealed cash or money orders in the mail. Now, I can only get a subscription via PayPal which not only forces me to have a bank account but forces me to go to the internet to make my order. Do you see the problems with this? Banks + PayPal are powerful corporations—and every use of them puts money into the pockets of these evil institutions, just as buying a CD used to result in profits to defense industry titan Thorn-EMI. *MRR* used to stand in opposition to corporate record labels, but now requires subscribers to maintain + use bank + PayPal accounts!

The classified ad section of *MRR* used to be one of the best parts of the zine. It was like a social network in itself. I made many good friends through the classifieds, which enabled me to couch surf all over the world—from San Fran to NYC to London to Berlin. Many of my friends said they bought + read *MRR* primarily for the classiefieds. The best thing about the classifieds is they allowed *MRR* readers to connect directly with each other. *MRR* was not just a one-way broadcast—it was an interactive community. It is very sad to me that this is gone. It would be wonderful if it ever returned, though I suspect it would takea while for it to build enough momentum to return to its former glory—even a fraction of that.

I offer these criticisms only with the best intentions. I want to see *MRR* last for many more decades. But I also want, selfishly, to once again have access to a vast underground world of music, zines, and pen pals that *MRR* used to surface to me every month: a true alternative to mainstream culture.

Thank you for reading.

Scatter
Slut City Punx
369 East 900 South #326
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
United States

Hey Scatter,
Thanks for writing in!

I want to be very clear here: MRR cares about print very, very much. That's the reason you're holding this issue in your hands! I think it's undeniable, though, that the world has changed a lot since 1991, and the internet is a major factor in most people's lives at this point. That's why we offer links to bandcamp and the like: not, as you suggest, because MRR is auxiliary to the internet, but because we view the internet as auxiliary to MRR. We offer these links only in an attempt to make the music we cover more accessible, which we think is, on the whole, a good thing! For the contact page at the back of the reviews section, we do our best to find physical addresses—it's just that most bands and labels no longer make them publicly known.

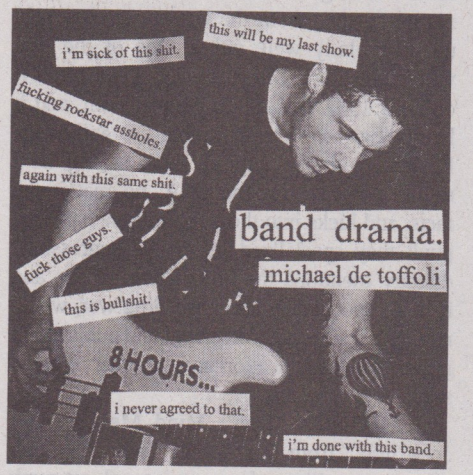
We do not want it to be necessary to have the internet, or a bank account for that matter, to enjoy MRR. You are welcome to send a money order if you wish to subscribe; we receive money orders from subscribers and advertisers each week. Cash is a little tricker because it's more likely to get stolen, but if we receive cash for a subscription, then we'll get you your subscription!

As far as the classifieds section goes, I wasn't here when it was halted, but my impression is that it was stopped because not enough people were taking out classified ads. Every so often we receive letters (or emails!) from people who have something they want to advertise in the classifieds section; depending on the details, we either run those requests as a letter (for free!) or assist them with taking out a small ad—and our rates for our smallest ads are pretty damn reasonable, I'd say!

It is super important to us to have a print magazine that can be enjoyed by people without using the internet. You don't need the internet to subscribe to MRR, you don't need the internet to take out an ad in MRR, and you definitely don't need the internet to read MRR. Long live print!

—Miranda Fisher

COLUMNS



Bandmates require time, attention, patience, forgiveness, stimulation, trust, and a general sense of commitment, same as a partner, and I believe that band relationships are just as important as any romantic relationship. They'll become a part of your life, good or bad, and if you're going to stay together, all these things need to be addressed. That's what this column is here for: to discuss why bands fight, why bands work or don't work, why bands succeed, and why bands break up. In almost every way, this is kind of a relationship column, to examine the fragile relationships that you have with your bandmates.

I had a huge awakening in college when I started experimenting with sound. I've always been really intrigued with sound and tone, but I was also afraid of my settings because I didn't understand them. When I was in high school, our guitarist dialed in my amp for me at practice once, and I didn't let anyone touch it for years afterward. I was even paranoid about carrying it because I didn't want to bump the knobs and wind up sounding shitty again. I was so impressed with bands that had effects and could manipulate their sounds into something that no one else in the room had, but I assumed that they were born with some higher donsciousness than me and had the intelligence to understand what all they could do. There were a few years where people I knew heard me talk about this and lent me a spare chorus pedal or something to dick around with, and it was a creative and inspiring period, but again I wasn't changing any effect options on the pedal. I clicked it on and clicked it off again, and that's all it got to do. When I was eighteen, Target (I know, right?) started carrying entry-level instruments and such, and they sold a distortion pedal and chorus pedal package for $20, and I figured it was too cheap to pass up, so I started down the road of fucking with effects.

Five years later, when I was in school downtown and lived on the south end of the city, I would sometimes miss the last train going home at 1 AM. So I'd sleep at our rehearsal studio that was only about a mile away. At that time I was super lucky to score a used modded DD-6 that was kind of fucked up and would wig out on me, so it was cheap. It was the perfect entry into sound manipulation. I remember that first night at like 2 AM getting frustrated with how much this thing could do and how little I understood it, so I snapped and just started twisting knobs as it screamed at me. The delay trails would warp out and it sounded like it was losing its balance before catching its footing and falling gracefully. Starting on that night, I rolled all my settings on all my pedals and my head down to zero before I left. I didn't want to be scared of it anymore, so my goal was to have to dial myself in brand new every time I touched it and force myself to learn what this motherfucker was capable of.

So that became my jam: be in the labs until 12 or 1 AM, grab a 40 oz or a Four Loko and a burrito from the liquor store on the way over, and sit in the studio all night, pushing my growing pedal board to each hemisphere to see what all I had at my feet. With this, my songwriting style started to change as I was learning all the options that I had. The problem was that this irked our guitarist. He hated my pedals because they were so cheap and "shitty" and roasted me all the time for being "that bass player." He has that kind of stubborn personality to where if he's at all challenged he digs his heels in. So this dude goes direct in to his amp, no matter what, not even a tuning pedal (he used an app on his phone.) Over the past seven years, my board has gone through huge changes and upgrades with any and every new deal I can score, and he's had the same attitude. Especially that first year, on my lunch breaks at work I would inhale so many pedal demos and tone instructionals on YouTube, and I had to learn to stop sending him things that I thought were interesting because he'd just laugh it off. It was really frustrating, and I would have loved to have had some support at that time, and especially loved to have someone to go down that road with, but I had to learn how to do it alone and just for myself.

This last year our vocalist was saying that she was struggling because our PA doesn't have any reverb options and she has to yell louder because of it, and I realized that I had a bunch of old pedals that would do just that. I built her this little mini-board with verb and delay and a cool old chorus pedal that I'm not using anymore, and our guitar player kind of went off the deep end. He had gotten an overdrive pedal that he wasn't happy with and shrugged it off, but after we made this vocal mini-board he dove head first into the world of pedals and gear. In two months, he's gotten six top of the line baller pedal to build a big rig, and he's just getting started. I didn't really know how to feel. At first, yeah I think I was really excited. I finally got someone to communicate with about this passion that I've dedicated the last half of my life to. He even started sending me videos of rig rundowns and pedal shootouts. And then he sent me one that I sent him five years ago...and he roasted me for it then...And then all the negative shit thoughts started to swirl. I had written music back then with experimental noise intros and outros and he'd lectured me about how I can't thrust my shit onto this band like that, and then two weeks ago at practice when we're working out a new song he suggests a noise intro. So how the fuck should I feel right now?! First of all, I'm pissed that I had to swallow so much of his shit back when and I felt kept down at a really creative time in my life. Second of all, I was made to feel guilty because I had time and energy to learn something that scared me, and I ended up harnessing it. I was made to believe that my pedal board was both nerdy and elitist, and overall inappropriate to our band. I really needed him at that time, and he consistently ridiculed me for that. So here we are now, all these years later, and he's catching up. So how the fuck do I feel??!!! To be honest, I want to feel relieved and excited. I want to welcome him with open arms and share his new excitement, because I know what it's like to not have anyone at that crucial time. Most importantly, I want to rub his face in his

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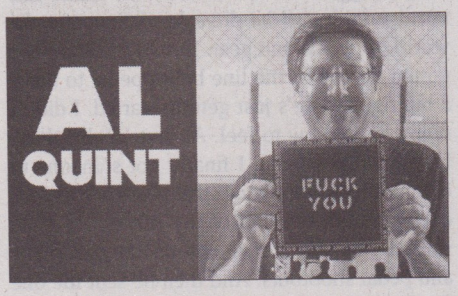
hypocrisy, but then again I also don't want to because I know how much that hurts when someone makes you feel ugly when you're newly inspired by something. I can shove in his face how shitty he was to me and make him feel just as badly as I did, or I can give him what I needed at that time and encourage him. What feels good now, vs. what I needed to feel then, vs. what would benefit both of us going forward.

Each month BAND DRAMA will either be reviewing a universal issue that all bands face, or I'll be reviewing one of your band's issues. If you'd like a fresh perspective, advice, or just to vent in general (anonymously or not), reach out to banddramamrr@gmail.com. I've been in a lot of bands for the past sixteen years, which means that I've been in a lot of bands that have ended or failed. I'd like to think that I've grown from each, learned from each, and taken the time to reflect on each failure or success. I'm also still learning and experiencing and I always will be. So I want to share what I've learned, as well as learn from all y'all punks in bands too.



HERE TO BURY, NOT TO PRAISE…
GEORGE BUSH AND PUNK ROCK

George H.W. Bush, the 41st President of the United States, passed away recently at the age of 94. As you can imagine, the mainstream press coverage was glowing, even from so-called liberal pundits and outlets. His various misdeeds during his one term (1989–1993) were glossed over, if mentioned at all. Of course, compared to the current occupant, Bush the Elder is a regular saint. The record, though, speaks otherwise. For all of his talk about a "kinder, gentler nation," he wasn't too kind or gentle by getting us into pointless military conflicts in Panama and the Persian Gulf (aka Operation Desert Storm). He pardoned the criminals involved in the Iran / Contra cover-up. He said "I will never apologize for the United States of America. Ever. I don't care what the facts are," after a US warship shot down an Iranian passenger flight and killed nearly 300 people, including 66 children. Really kind...really gentle.

His 1988 presidential campaign against Massachusetts Governor Mike Dukakis engaged in unconscionable race-baiting, largely spearheaded by his campaign manager Lee Atwater. Massachusetts had a prisoner furlough program and one Black inmate granted a weekend furlough, Willie Horton, didn't return and, a year later, murdered a man and raped his fiancée before being caught. A pro-Bush political action committee broadcast an ad about the furlough program and Horton's crimes that set off more than a few dog whistles. Atwater said he wanted to make Horton Dukakis's running mate. When Atwater was dying of cancer some years later, he apologized for his antics (boo-hoo, asshole), which live on in the kinds of campaigns Republicans have run ever since.

Bush appointed Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, a right wing extremist who has been on the wrong side of just about every decision made in the past 25-plus years. And that was after a contentious hearing where Anita Hill, a law professor who had served as an assistant to Thomas during his tenure as her supervisor at the Department of Education and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, testified his incessant sexual harassment of her. He still got confirmed by a 52-48 vote in the Senate. Bush did make another appointment that worked out a lot better—David Souter, who ended up voting with the "liberal" bloc on the Court, and that wasn't taken particularly well by those who thought he'd be a reliably conservative justice.

Bush was also no friend of the LGBT community or people afflicted with the HIV virus and AIDS. He wouldn't change a policy that prevented people who were HIV-positive from entering the US. And while he gave a speech urging compassion towards those suffering from the disease, he was still largely indifferent towards it, as was the case with his predecessor St. Ronnie of Reagan. The disease spread a great deal during the four years he was in office. He did sign the Americans With Disabilities Act, and that was something positive, although there wasn't a lot of risk since it passed both houses of Congress by a wide margin. The ADA prevented discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS. I have a feeling something like that would never pass today. So, yeah, even a broken clock is right twice a day, to use a cliché. By the way, in a cruel(?) twist of irony, Bush died on World AIDS Day.

But this is a punk rock zine and, while there were songs that directly and indirectly addressed Bush's transgressions and the political and sociological climate in general, it seemed to be less prevalent than during Reagan's regime. There wasn't any Rock Against Bush tour that I can recall. I'd argue that there was more activity protesting Bush's son George W. Bush's administration, in the aftermath of 9/11 and the endless "War on Terror," Patriot Act, etc. Fat Mike from NOFX organized a Rock Against Bush voter registration drive in 2004 but, of course, Dubya got re-elected.

Some punks were definitely paying attention, though. I picked people's brains after the elder Bush's death and we were able to come up with good songs from that period of time, as well as some not-so-great ones. And let's be honest—not every song from the Reagan era has held up particularly well, either. One of the best was "One Sided Story" by ECONOCHRIST, on their 1992 Trained To Serve album, and it later appeared on their double CD anthology. It starts with the clip of Bush saying he'd never apologize for the USA, no matter the facts, and kicks into the edgy, intense hardcore punk they specialized in. "New Regression" directly mentions the New World Order and is more specifically about the drug war, where money is spent on enforcement and punishment rather than on education and necessary human services programs.

SCHLONG's "Don't Mind Me I've Got Jock Itch," from their Waxy Yellow Buildup album, transitions from an atonal art-punk start into something straight ahead and catchy and the sensibility is wise-assed. From what I can make out of the lyrics (I don't have the record, unfortunately), it might be tying ol' George's impotence to warmongering. Sometimes the puerile route can be the way to go. Meanwhile, GRIMPLE's "Bushanomics," off 1992's Up Your Ass, is a rampant thrasher with glass-gargling ranting vocals and would have fit in well during the Reagan era, although I think DRI already had that song title covered. LOS CRUDOS's Spanish language song "Asesinos"—translating to "Assassins"—is a one minute, full-blitz tirade and the chorus goes "Bush (asesino), Pinochet (asesino), Hitler (asesino), Baby Doc (asesino)"...all murderers. With the assistance of the CIA, Augusto Pinochet overthrew the democratically elected administration of Salvador Allende in 1973 and Allende allegedly committed suicide that day, although many think he was murdered. That would be same CIA that Bush directed in the mid '70s and, according to an article in The Nation, was working with right-wing death squads in Latin America Pinochet was a murderous dictator—just the kind of Latin American leader that Republicans love.

COFFIN BREAK's 1990 single "Kill The President" is an insanely-catchy pop punk song and features an image of you-know-who on the cover with the caption, "'Read My Lips' BUSH: 'I do not want to see one kid lose his life. Not one.'" The song seems to be about a person perhaps having some mental health issues ("I'm so happy we live in harmony / I'm

so happy we'll change history / I'm so... / I'm so happy I wanna kill my family.") then says how happy he was Bush got elected and he's so happy he wants to kill him. And it ends with a harmonious "Wanna kill the president... / Kill the president... / Kill that wacky, kooky, funky / Wacky, kooky, funky guy in the White House... / Ooo-ooo-oooooh..." You'll be singing it all day—but you might want to watch who you sing it around. I'm surprised I've never had a problem when I've played it on the radio show, something I do every Presidents' Day and I just dug out for my Bush "tribute." And it looks like COFFIN BREAK did have a bit of an issue when the FBI came a-calling!

One of the weirdest split 7" pairings I can think of—the New World Order: War No. 1 release on the Maximum Rocknroll label—features BAD RELIGION and radical professor NOAM CHOMSKY. BAD RELIGION's "Heaven Is Falling" and "Fertile Crescent" are direct critiques of "King George" and his campaign of warmongering. I'm not really into their sound anymore, to be honest—the uptempo melodic punk with "oozin' ahhs" backing vocals, as they call it. The flip is an excerpt from a CHOMSKY speech about the geopolitics behind the war and how Saddam Hussein went from an American ally to foe. The record's packaged with an informative fold-out that provides in-depth background analysis for the real reasons behind Desert Storm and the successful propaganda effort that created vast support for the effort. Bush's approval ratings climbed to 90% following the conflict.

JELLO BIAFRA's "Full Metal Jackoff," off his Last Scream of the Missing Neighbors collaboration with DOA, is an epic track in every sense of the word. In fact, too epic, stretching out to nearly fourteen minutes. Accompanied by a steady, hard-rocking base, BIAFRA lays out a laundry list of the news of the day, particularly the "War on Drugs" and where those drugs really come from and who they go after—people of color. In fact, Willie Horton is mentioned: "You see a black face, you see a crackhead / you see a black face, you see Willie Horton with a knife." Powerful... but fourteen minutes? It's easier to take than Biafra's Die For Oil, Sucker 7". There's plenty of information contained in the foldout but, with Biafra's spoken word, a little goes a very long way. Two rants (the other is an altered version of "The Pledge Of Allegiance" that are more lyrics without musical accompaniment than his "talks." I tend to agree with BIAFRA, but this just painful.

FUGAZI certainly dealt with various issues during the Bush era on their albums—they didn't come right out say "Fuck Bush" on them, but they were engaged with what was going on. There was the Punk Percussion Protest and War On Poverty Not In the Middle East, which was a direct reaction to Desert Storm. It was originally meant to bring attention to homelessness in the country with the It happened on January 12, 1991, directly in front of the White House. Bush had received authorization from Congress to wage war against the Iraqis "occupying" Kuwait. The weather was miserably cold, rainy and snowy but FUGAZI played anyway and you can see their pretty explosive set on YouTube. Brendan Canty played in shirtsleeves. He must have frozen his ass off!

As for their recordings, one song that comes to mind is "Dear Justice Letter," directed towards retiring Supreme Court justice William Brennan, one of the Court's liberal stalwarts for over 30 years, until he stepped down and was replaced by Souter (who, as I said, turned out to be more moderate than expected). It comes across as more of a sigh of resignation, that there's a bit of a letdown, although it's not stated directly. In a general sense, though, Fugazi did exude and anger and passion that was obviously influenced by what was going on in DC and elsewhere. "23 Beats Off" is about AIDS, although, in Joe Gross's 33 1/3 book about In On The Kill Taker, Ian MacKaye says it's about Freddie Mercury from QUEEN and tennis legend Arthur Ashe not really being public about their battles with HIV early enough, something that might have helped create more awareness about the disease and perhaps destigmatized it a bit. "Give Me The Cure" is also about AIDS, although it precedes the Bush era.

Finally, two of the better Bush era protest-type songs actually come from the industrial music realm. MINISTRY's "N.W.O", on their 1991 album Psalm 69, is a raucous piece of metallic industrial crush. The title is short for "New World Order," something Bush frequently mentioned, particularly after the first Gulf War. I'll leave it to students of political science and history to give more of an in-depth political analysis. Bush's utterance is sampled throughout the track. It's also sampled on TEST DEPT.'s "New World Order," which is more of an experimental audio collage of various Bush utterances set to a potent rhythmic, danceable (if that's your thing) rhythmic clatter.

I was recently speaking with a musician / label owner, and he was lamenting the fact that there didn't seem to be as many anti-Trump punk songs as he'd hoped for. I don't think he's really tapped in with the underground (he did his band and label mainly in the late '80s and part of the '90s). The whole "Trump is going to make punk great again" thing. I told him that there have been a few, even if some of them feel a bit obvious or forced. I told him about this column and my premise that the first Bush era didn't have the output of the Reagan years and he pointed out that Bush only had one term. He's correct. And I'm really hoping we won't have to have too many more anti-Trump songs because, maybe, he'll only serve one term as well. Otherwise, the floodgates might open...bigly!

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Since I just finished putting together my requisite Top Ten of 2018 list for *MRR*, which always feels so unnatural and stresses me out way more than it probably should, I feel like I've earned the right to mentally shift gears here for a bit and start my final column of 2018 by talking about what I've actually been listening to as this year is about to end, even if it's mostly things that came out almost four decades ago...

Fringe post-punk resurrectionists Bunkerpop Records are back with their first release in two years, a reissue of the 1985 four-song *7-Inch Round Black Thing* EP by Auckland, New Zealand's art-damaged provocateurs ?FOG. Vocalist Sam Swan landed in the group after her stint in the short-lived LIFE IN THE FRIDGE EXISTS (whose "Have You Checked The Children?" remains one of the most eternal classics of '80s Kiwi DIY), and both projects shared a decidedly shambolic approach with inclination toward performative theatricality. ?FOG ultimately took things into a much more confrontational direction—deep, propulsive bass lines colliding with urgent drumming, stuttering razor-wire guitar, and deadpan lyrical recitations marked by pitch black, tongue-in-cheek sarcasm (especially on the fiery feminist take-down of "Fatman With a Big Dork"). The choppy rhythms and dueling male / female rant between Sam and guitarist Lindsay Fog on "Five Heads of State" puts ?FOG on a very EX-like axis of agitated skronk, and there's even some distant

echoes of the Rough Trade school of spiky AU PAIRS / DELTA 5-style UK femme-punk in "Move Your Brain," if that particular sound had then been refracted through the cracked lens of harsh-edged avant-noisemakers like the GORDONS over on New Zealand's South Island. Between this single, the two recent NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS LP collections, and the THIS SPORTING LIFE CD anthology, 2018 has been a pretty solid year for bringing renewed attention to some of the weirder and less musically linear products of the early-to-mid '80s NZ underground, but this one is an especially obscure delight to have been rescued from the archives. (Bunkerpop, bunkerpop.bandcamp.com)

French coldwave group COLDREAMS released a two-song 7" that's since become one of the formative (and most highly sought-after) touchstones of the genre's mid-'80s second wave, so the straight reissue of the original single that just recently turned up on Parisian label Camisole is a nice end-of-year surprise for any Factory Records-meets-4AD freaks out there. While COLDREAMS borrowed from the detached presence and bass-anchored minimalist post-punk rhythms associated with the early Euro coldwavers like CHARLES DE GOAL and KAS PRODUCT, their approach was also much less mechanical and dystopian, instead leaning toward gauzy, ethereal melodies not entirely dissimilar to those of goth-tinged dream-pop combos like COCTEAU TWINS or even *Faith* / *Pornography*-era CURE. You can almost picture frost forming on some dimly-lit window as the swirling synths in "Morning Rain" blur right into Géraldine Sala's sweet-yet-somber vocals, but there's an almost breezy undercurrent amidst all of the longing and gloom that spares COLDREAMS from any overly melodramatic darkwave pretensions. While that song is great, the sparse B-side "Eyes" is the real gem here, quietly drifting in the same mysterious and otherworldly minimal wave / synth-pop atmosphere as cult heroes SOLID SPACE, and it's just as chillingly beautiful as anything on that group's much-beloved *Space Museum*. (Camisole, camisolerecords.bigcartel.com)

Not reissued (at least not yet), but something that I've been playing a bit lately: RAZOR PENGUINS were from Columbus, Ohio, and their debut two-song 7" from 1981 was an exercise in bleak, incisive post-punk that largely deviated from the sort of warped and deconstructed weirdo sounds generally associated with late '70s / early '80s Ohio DIY (think ELECTRIC EELS, DEVO, PERE UBU, et al). There's definitely some psychic connections to be drawn between the post-industrial decay of the Rust Belt and the grey, brutalist urban landscapes of London and Manchester, so in that sense, it's entirely fitting that RAZOR PENGUINS would have turned to the early output of 4AD and Factory Records for their primary source material—JOY DIVISION, obviously, but also slightly less canonized groups such as CRISPY AMBULANCE or IN CAMERA who had a similar affinity for sinister bass throb, martial beats, and vocals delivered with a desperately anxious edge. The single's frantic A-side, "Paris," is a perfectly dark discotheque smash for the black peacoat and clove cigarette crowd, all needling guitar, loping bass, busy hi-hat, and anguished shouts like they were trying to come up with an American response to SECTION 25's 'Girls Don't Count." On the flipside, "Indifference" gives in to the band's starker goth leanings, existing in some parallel universe where Ian Curtis never died, NEW ORDER never existed, and JOY DIVISION had simply gone into semi-secrecy to come up with a follow-up to *Closer* after relocating to the middle of Ohio. RAZOR PENGUINS wound up putting out one more 7" in 1986 before totally falling off the radar, but it couldn't reach the same heights at this one. Midwest post-punk gold!

On a more contemporary tip, Manchester's clattering and clanging combo D.U.D.S. (formerly known as, uh, DUDS) are back from last year's apparently brief foray on Castle Face with a new LP called *Immediate*, and it's an even more controlled exercise in walking the tightrope between spiral scratched post-punk and the kinetic danceability of the early '80s post-No Wave downtown sound (think LIQUID LIQUID or pretty much anyone on ZE / 99 Records). The clash of rubbery bass and wiry, minimalist guitar definitely still harks back to GANG OF FOUR, but without that band's tendency toward dryly caustic lyrical commentary on the effects of capitalism on interpersonal relationships—the shouted (and somewhat buried) declarations that D.U.D.S. throw out seem to be much more abstracted and cryptic, with a good number of the songs this time around dispensing with words altogether, leaving just a skeleton of knotted and frenetic rhythms behind. The occasional sharp bursts of brass that were scattered across their previous record have also been more fully integrated into the D.U.D.S. equation this time around, with "Humour and Friction" and "Same Device" in particular recalling the horn-spiked harsh funk and mutant disco commotion of early A CERTAIN RATIO. Shack up, y'all. (Opal Tapes / Red Wig, opaltapes.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.

The Decentralization of Punk Rock Pt. 1

It's not uncommon to hear people ask where all the punk bands have gone. They didn't used to be so hard to find. Every genre had its mecca: originally it was New York, Riot Grrrl had Olympia, straightedge had DC, etc... However, there isn't really a mecca now. At first it might seem like this sucks. Do less people listen to punk? And how am I supposed to choose what city to go to college in? But don't worry! This is good news in disguise! We don't need a mecca because punk rock is much more widespread than it used to be, especially in the US. There are a lot of reasons for this, but I'm just going to talk about two for now. One is the internet, which I'll get into next month. Another is the tenacity of bands on tour, pioneered by BLACK FLAG. I don't like a lot of the stuff those guys have done, but we've got a lot to thank them and their insane touring schedules for. They played every place that let them, and even some that wouldn't, all across the country, which paved the way to scenes in some of the most unlikely places.

Take Boone, North Carolina. It's in the mountains, about two hours away from both Charlotte and Asheville. It's not the most likely place to find a thriving punk scene. But even though it's not New York or LA, there's still a ton of really cool stuff coming out of there. I was visiting family there for the holidays and went downtown to 641 RPM, a record / sound system repair shop, to take a break from the insanity. It's not a huge shop, but there are enough records and speakers and turntables to leave you somewhat overwhelmed. There was a steady stream of people coming in and out too, despite the store's somewhat vague hours. At one point, two kids came in and went to the back to watch some guy work on repairing some ancient music listening devices that must be impossible to find parts for.

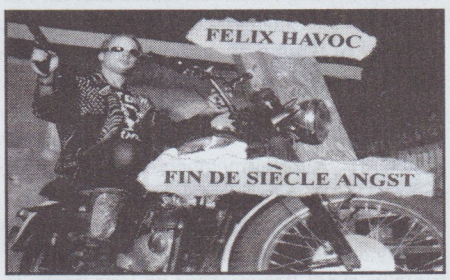
That guy is Ben. He was wearing a trucker hat, had a beard down to his belt, and he's pretty much the boss of 641 RPM. I first spoke to him to ask what a little 7" compilation of local bands sounded like. After telling me, he asked what other sorts of music I liked. Then he asked how weird I was willing to get. Weirdness is pretty relative, but it definitely

can't hurt, so I told him I was ready for anything he could throw at me. "I have to got my paying job now," he said. "But come back Saturday and I'll show some great local stuff."

I need a healthy ratio of records to people in my life, and on Thanksgiving that gets way out of whack, so naturally I went back to 641 RPM that Saturday. Ben was there, and he immediately started throwing records my way. I was there for over an hour, and for the whole time he gave me his undivided attention. He talked with me about which of the records I liked, told me about the bands I was hearing and all kinds of interesting stuff about the local scene. He had a board of upcoming shows at four local venues, two of which were all ages, and one of which was the shop itself. "None of the kids here put much stuff out on vinyl," he lamented. "And they don't want to play the real venues! The venues will take them, but they prefer doing basement shows."

I ended up buying a few records, including *Alien* by PSYCHIC BLOOD, *Third Sister* by NEW BOSS, and a Save Your Generation records 7" comp, which are all from around the Boone area. This experience also reminded me of one of the main reasons I love DIY punk so much: because some normal people in the '80s decided give up their sanity to spread their gospel, you can live hundreds of miles apart from someone, have totally different lives, and maybe even only talk once, but it gives you this immediate connection. I find it so cool that there's little creative communities all over, and it's even cooler when they connect.

Maybe after reading this column you'll want to connect with someone in a cool, faraway place. I live in Philly so it's not *that* cool, but we'll make it work! If you're under eighteen and you make cool stuff or want to talk about your experiences, I'd love to talk or review your stuff so that I don't have to keep coming up with something new to write about each month. Get in touch at carmenservon@gmail.com.



Last month I reviewed / discussed the book *We Are the Clash*. This inspired me to re-read Marcus Gray's "Last Gang in Town," which then inspired me to take a lot of dusty books and records from 1976–1977 off the shelf. I think it takes a little work writing from the DIY punk perspective of today to wrap our heads around the mindset of bands back then. First of all, almost every first and second wave punk band was very focused on "getting signed." True, the BUZZCOCKS self released their own 7", the first true DIY punk record. But this was largely a gambit to get attention in order to get signed. Most of the early UK bands existing in a scene that was a simmering pot of creative and talented people all looking for something in the wake of the STOOGES, NEW YORK DOLLS, and glam. When punk started to blow up, dozens of bands formed, but almost of all of them with managers, a traditional music business orientation, and a goal of getting signed. And in the feeding frenzy that followed the SEX PISTOLS blowing up, almost all of them did get signed. When you read memoirs and interviews with a lot of the American bands that started up in the early days of punk, there's a ton of bitterness and sour grapes about bands that "should have been huge" and the like from all the new wave bands that existed in that era between the SEX PISTOLS' US tour and the birth of hardcore. I remember JELLO BIAFRA once saying in an interview that he believed US labels were about to sign up a lot of punk bands but the Carter administration shook down the major labels out of fear of a repeat of '60s youth counterculture growing out of the punk scene. That may be a bit of conspiracy theory, but we can extrapolate to wonder just what would have happened if the AVENGERS, CRIME, and the WIPERS had gotten picked up by major labels in those days.

A lot of people who write about that era speculate that the reason the first wave of punk burned out so fast is that everyone who had been kicking around London killing time in art school or playing NEW YORK DOLLS and BOWIE covers either *did* get signed, or failing, quickly moved on to the next thing (new wave, new romantic, ska, etc.) To be honest, as much as I love the CLASH, X-RAY SPEX, and GENERATION X, I am rather glad those bands quickly got out of the way for the next wave of punk. The CLASH were one of the last of the first wave of punk bands to sign to a major label. While this had more to do with the band's management than any political stance, there were many at the time who felt that the CLASH should stay outside the music business, on a independent label. Indeed, Mark P. famously said "punk died the day the CLASH signed to CBS." While his obituary for punk was a bit premature, he made a valid point. Signing to a major label and embracing the culture of corporate entertainment basically annulled the political message of the CLASH. Ironically, much of the CLASH's "story" in the ensuing years was quarreling with CBS (complete control!) The CLASH justified their move by saying that only by being on major label could they reach the masses with their political message. Their critics retorted that the political message was shallow and the CLASH just wanted to be rock stars. When the CLASH managed to renege on all their promises and change their sound to radio rock, it only validated the critics.

Indeed, this hardened the stance of the emerging DIY bands like CRASS. One of my all time favorite bands is RUDIMENTARY PENI, whose classic song "Rotten to the Core" reminds us *"Rock stars deal in money not truth / It's good business to exploit you / Just look at LYDON and STRUMMER for truth."* However, I would argue that in an unintended and backwards way, the CLASH signing actually did get that message out to a lot of people, just to the small, die hard group who quickly rejected the CLASH for their hypocrisy. Because all that posturing and media manipulation of 1977 was interpreted and internalized by its recipients in different ways. And just like there were a lot of talented people hanging around London in '75 and '76 hoping to jump on the next big thing, there was another generation of younger, people who took all those messages and propaganda at face value. The working class agitprop and situationism of the CLASH and the PISTOL was all pretty shallow, and smacked more of provocation on the part of Rhodes and McClaren than deeply held convictions by the musicians themselves. But when CRASS and the like picked up that ball and ran with it, the whole concept of mixing music, art, and politics went to the next level. When Dangerhouse and Dischord started releasing and distributing their own records, it was taking the message (spread by hypocritical major label rock acts) at face value and shifted the relationship of music to the establishment.

This subtle shift in the late '70s of course paved the way for hardcore, but I think it's more significant than we often think and also quite possible it could have never happened. Ironically, this would have been most likely if the SEX PISTOLS, the CLASH, and the DAMNED had bashed away in London pubs for a year or two, caused a minor fuss, *not gotten signed*, and moved on to the next thing. Lenin once said the "capitalist will sell you the rope you intend to hang him with," and in this way, the corporate music business provided a platform to the early punk scene. This scene was contrived and somewhat insincere, but its interpretation by the fans carried the seeds of the demise of the control of the industry over youth culture. Indeed, when we talk about hardcore, it's so non-commercial that we can say that in 30 years only a handful of hardcore bands have signed to major labels, such as the BEASTIE BOYS (who barely count) or

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HÜSKER DÜ (playing pop by the time they got signed). The only band I can think of that played anything like real hardcore on a major label is SICK OF IT ALL, and that's fairly tenuous. So let's all give thanks that this paradigm shift occurred sometime around 1980 and cleared out the aspiring rock stars. I'm sure it drained a lot of talent from the pool, but it certainly helped to maintain some level of integrity. I think this was heavily challenged in the pop / mall punk / Warped Tour era, but thankfully that's blown over. There is very little pressure on DIY hardcore from the outside world anymore. They don't give a shit about us, and we don't give a shit about them; a true counter culture exists outside the dominant culture, and in an odd way this has become a reality thanks to a few major label bands over 30 years ago.

Italy's F.O.A.D. Records have already firmly established themselves as one of the premier reissue labels in the world, having released dozens of well-packaged and comprehensive recordings of hardcore punk and metal bands from all over the world. For their 150th(!) release, they've outdone themselves once again, offering up an incredible LP and EP package featuring the music of Japan's SODOM. Most well known in hardcore circles for their 1983 appearance on the extremely rare and widely coveted *ADK Omibus* double EP, SODOM started their career as a vicious hardcore band before transforming over the course of a decade into more of a gothic / Visual Kei band. Concentrating on the hardcore years, the F.O.A.D. reissue offers up all the *ADK Omnibus* tracks on a single 45 RPM EP and the 1984 *St. Requiem* cassette album tracks on LP. Everything is carefully remastered and sounds fantastic, with just a hint of ambient tape hiss on the LP to remind the listener of the source material. The EP tracks are the most straightforward that the band released, short, nasty and aggressive hardcore that stands alongside contemporaries the EXECUTE as some of the heaviest metal-free hardcore produced in Japan at the time. Great stuff, but the real attraction here is the *St. Requiem* material, which has been very difficult to track down previously and represents the finest blending of death rock and hardcore punk ever committed to tape. The CHRISTIAN DEATH influence is pronounced but not overwhelming, with vocals that recall Kelvin Morris as much as they do Rozz Williams and riffing that features much more punk grit than drama. All of this musical treasure is housed in a beautifully designed black and silver gatefold sleeve with a fat booklet featuring crisply reproduced photos and flyers from the band's early history. Sadly, this seems to have mostly sold out in pre-order, so it will be difficult to find a copy. One would hope the label could be prevailed upon to offer up a second run with enough interest expressed by the mass of punx.

F.O.A.D. also recently released the vinyl version of Japanese punk (ugh) "supergroup" EIEFITS' new album *Mezame* on hefty 180 gram vinyl. Featuring members who have done time with such heavy hitters as LIP CREAM, the COMES, EXTINCT GOVERNMENT, HUMAN ARTS, FORWARD, and the HECK, EIEFITS have been consistently excellent since their 2012 debut EP. Fronted by the HECK's Saho, one of the the best Japanese frontwomen in punk history, EIEFITS are nothing more or less than a fucking great straightforward punk band, touching on the joyful noise of X-RAY SPEX, the tunefulness of the BLUE HEARTS and even the smarter, more experimental fringes of pop-punk (*a la* DISCOUNT), though there are moments like the chorus of "Filter of Wisdom" with its harsh riff and gang vocals that pure classic '80s Japanese hardcore as well. T.T.'s inimitable guitar leads, which defined so much of the early FORWARD sound, are front and center throughout, suitably punked-up to match the EIEFITS sound, supported by a rock-solid rhythm section that's highlighted by the propulsive but never over-busy drumming. Thankfully, the lovely, colorful packaging includes translated lyrics, which are just as impactful when they're meditations on a moment in time or an exhortation to be yourself as they are when they're tackling issues of global import. This is a fucking great LP. There's a CD available via Mangrove Records as well, if that's your thing. NB: the A and B-side labels are transposed on my copy; I'm not sure if that's an issue with the entire pressing or not.

Pogo 77 offer up a more immediate kind of reissue with SKITKLASS' *GREATEST sHITS* LP, a collection of this ferocious Swedish hardcore worshipping gimp-masked band of Japanese freaks. These mystery men have the punk game sewn up tight, from their songwriting to their aesthetic to their live performances, SKITKLASS are designed from the ground up to astonish and destroy. Featuring the material from this remarkably prolific band's first two EPs and three cassette tapes, this LP offers up 22 short, speedy hardcore shocks that joins SKITLICKERS-style Scandi-core with the swinging chaos of Japanese hardcore thrash *a la* JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS or RAZOR'S EDGE, all housed in a sweet six-panel fold-out sleeve. Their consistency makes it difficult to single out a single track or two for praise, everything here is kind of equally fucking killer. Per the immortal ad copy for the first DISCHARGE single, this is "Punk At Its Best! Fast—Raw—Loud, Crack Your Brain Up!" Given how quickly all these previous releases were snapped up, picking this up is a no-brainer for anyone who's no yet initiated into the SKITKLASS cult.

Another band to crack your brain up are Tajima's BARROWS, who recently self-released the intensely DIY *Discord and Society* EP. Recorded on portable equipment in a warehouse due to lack of local access to a recording studio, this gnarly EP recalls pre-DISCLOSE Japanese D-beat, more akin to bands like ACID, MACROFARGE, and even the CLAY than the more noisy modern style. Of course the muffled, slightly claustrophobic recording contributes to this feel, but the lack of feedback and extremely driven attack of the band are equally as important. Their Swedish hardcore influence is apparent, of course, especially early ANTI-CIMEX and CRUDE S.S., but the Japanese crust influence is just as prevalent. I could easily imagine these tracks appearing on one of the early '90s Discipline / Vinyl Japan compilations like *Who's Chained Up to the Dogs of Outrage?* or especially *Truth?* alongside bands like LIFE, ASH RAIN, and DEFIANCE (the Japanese one). There is nothing about this record that isn't as punk or punker than you or I. You can contact the band to inquire about securing a copy of this EP or their earlier *Remote Place Attack* demo at barrows.hxc@gmail.com.

On the stench-core beat, Canada's ZYGOME, featuring members of FRAGMENT and OUTCRY, recently released the *Crusher Stench* demo that was so damn good that it's already available on vinyl as well! The power trio plus synth lineup offers up four tracks of relatively up-tempo metallic stenchcore with noisy crasher crust influences. Driven by the guttural main vox and occasionally over-busy drumming, the rock-solid guitar playing and impeccable bass lines keep the band grounded and on point. Every track is solid, but the gems are at the end of the recording with the one-two

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punch of "Mental Murder" and "The Power Shifts." "Mental Murder" eases off the gas a bit and introduces the synths alongside some really nice melodic guitar work that recalls the post-AMEBIX band ZYGOTE (no coincidence there, name-wise). The chugging "The Power Shifts" is a seamless blend of the best of HELLBASTARD / AXEGRINDER riffage and the epic melodic impact of early TRAGEDY. This is a remarkably strong demo from a band that's definitely worth keeping an eye on long term. Grab a cassette copy from Runstate Tapes at runstate-tapes.com or the vinyl from Australia's Black Against Night Records.

Pivoting to the crasher-crust beat, the CRUSADE *Live at Guild* flexi has been available for a minute in a variety of formats, both being included with the repress of the *Stay Free* demo compilation on Japankore Records and as a stand-alone flexi. The 1993 recording is the same however you get it and it is rough and ready, not the highest fidelity but absolutely capturing the power of this pioneering band, highlighted by a blistering rendition of "An Ostrich Policy," which is easily one of the best songs ever written in the style. For my money, the best option available is the limited edition on Germany's Network of Friends label (run by a member of the criminally underrated '80s D-beat band SCAPEGOATS), which packages the flexi in a silk-screened cardboard box (art by Jacky Crust War) with a discography CD, an all new interview with bassist Chihiro, several stickers and a rather sharp badge.

Greece's ANTIMOB have laid relatively low since releasing their monster LP in 2012, having only released a split EP in the interim, but now they've returned in a big way with the Σταύρωση cassette EP. Limited to 200 copies to promote an upcoming EP and LP (drool!), this is huge-sounding Japanese hardcore influenced rage, built around a succession of incredibly tasty riffs and passionate, charismatic shouted vocals. My favorite moments recall DEATH SIDE circa *Bet on the Possibility*, but there are some intriguing moments of metallic complexity that recall the legends of Greek crust ala HIBERNATION and especially CHAOTIC END lapping at the edges of the riffing that gives the band's sound a whole new character. One of the band's greatest strengths is its mastery of the classic group backing vocal, employed here to maximum effect, granting a few tracks a bit of NYHC street tough swagger alongside blazing leads and stomping breakdowns. This is not only a great new recording but one that showcases a band that is at the peak of its power and is absolutely still growing and evolving. The recording is, as typical for the band, absolutely brilliant and was clearly mastered for the format as this tape is one of the best sounding non-commercial cassette releases I've ever heard, crisp and almost compression-free (the drums fade a little in the mix but not so badly as to be an issue). Masterful stuff, an instant candidate for best of 2018 status. Despite having been out for a while, it's definitely worth getting in touch with the label at exotikosparoxysmos.tumblr.com to see if any copies are available.

Fuck, this term-paper length column needs to wrap up! One last thing: due to a comical series of miscommunications and errors, I wrote a column a couple of months ago that never actually got printed in the mag. At this point it's a little too dated to put into print, but if you're interested, please email me at agunderwood@gmail.com and I'll send you a copy. It includes reviews of (then) new material by FEROCIOUS X and San Diego's THERAPY and the Radio Raheem Records reissues of HELLBENT and AGAINST. Dumb pics of my boring life @andrew94116 available on Instagram.

Simulating Stimulants

Medication Assisted (MAT) Therapy has been used to treat opioid addiction since the 1950s and has consistently proven to be effective in alleviating both morbidity and mortality from opioid use time and time again. Methadone, Buprenorphine (Suboxone), and Naltrexone (Vivitrol) are the three medications approved by the FDA for opioid substitution therapy. Since you can't control your dosage when you get your shit from the street because there's no way to know wtf is in it, substitution therapy provides a much safer and more stable alternative. These meds allow people to stave off cravings and sickness in order to get off street drugs. In some (rare) cases, doses can be high enough to produce a fraction of the euphoric feeling you get with actual dope. Sometimes substitution therapy lasts just a few months to help people taper down, sometimes it lasts a lifetime. Just like any other prescribed med, MAT allows people to live happier, safer, healthier lives. You probably know or have met people who are on substitution therapy and were none the wiser.

So, if there is so much documented success with opioid substitution therapy, why isn't there an equivalent system for stimulants like meth and coke? We all know, and mostly love, the pharmaceutical stimulants that are prescribed for ADHD: Adderall, Vyvanse, Ritalin, etc. Just like heroin, when you buy meth on the street you better believe there's some *shit* that can kill or injure you in that shake-and-bake. So why aren't doctors prescribing replacement therapy to help? 30% of people who use meth and coke have actually been diagnosed with ADHD at some point in their lives, vs 1% of the general population, so it's pretty clear that people are self-medicating when the system fails them.

Initial detox from meth and cocaine is nothing like withdrawing from opioids, but it sucks in its own right. After coming down off a long run, dopamine levels are be plummeting. Lethargy, depression, anhedonia (inability to feel pleasure), irritability, mental and physical exhaustion will be at an all-time high. You can count on your appetite and need for sleep to increase drastically. And of course there are all of the psych + sociological aspects of not being able to depend on your drug of choice and still keep your life from falling apart. A lot of these symptoms can last for months, and it can take up to two years for dopamine receptors to start functioning normally again. It makes a whole lot of sense to replace some of that dopamine, especially within the first few months of abstinence in order to reduce cravings and your risk of relapse early on.

John Grabowski is a physician and researcher from the University of Minnesota who is outspoken in his support of medication assisted treatment for stimulant use. Grabowski points out the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is historically anti-harm reduction and not really into the idea of investing in stimulant replacement therapy. Grabowski did a study where he prescribed prescription-grade methamphetamines to cocaine users, and it was quite successful at helping people quit. Such a maverick. Dr. William Stoops and Dr. Craig Rush at the University of Kentucky suggest an approach that really speaks to me: a *"'bedside-to-bench,' 'rosetta stone,' or 'reverse engineering' strategy for determining the predictive validity of laboratory procedures is important because these studies can be conducted more rapidly and efficiently than clinical trials. Human laboratory procedures also might identify the optimal conditions under which an agonist replacement therapy might be effective."* Essentially, let's stop wasting our damn time with expensive and time-consuming trials and use the tools we have now to try it in

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the real world.

This approach makes total sense to me, but I keep hearing from doctors and clinicians that studies are inconclusive, and that there's not enough evidence to prove that stimulant replacement therapy is effective. So I looked at some studies, and it's true: results were much less compelling than I would have assumed. But in most of the studies, there was a positive association that suggests stimulant replacement therapy is safe and effective both for acute withdrawal symptoms and long term substitution.

My opinion is that it can work, but that the studies themselves are flawed in their design. Almost all of them were set up to look at abstinence as the primary outcome rather than reduced use. Also, the medication being tested in all of these studies is within range of what is typically prescribed for its on-label uses, which has got to be far lower than what is needed to come off meth or coke. Dr. Grabowski and a lot of other doctors agree that dosing in all of these studies has been extremely inadequate, and is the reason that there aren't more statistically significant results out there.

What we do know is that a lot of patients who are quitting stimulants are using things like Adderall and Vyvanse to get them through the day. There's a lot of working meth users out there. I've met laborers, sex workers, professors, healthcare workers, MIT students, and a fair share of techie startup-types who all use meth while holding down a gig. If you're trying to quit but can't get through the day without falling asleep, that's not really conducive to quitting cold-turkey. But plenty of people have already taken it upon themselves to use these meds as a safer and more practical alternative to meth, so we know it's working from a harm reduction (i.e. real world) point of view.

Why do institutions turn their nose up at stimulant replacement therapy when literally millions of Americans are prescribed pharmaceutical stimulants every year? A: Potential for diversion and abuse. This is a bullshit excuse for helping people. The way I see it, no one knows you better than you, so if you believe that there's a prescription medication out there that would improve your quality of life or that you are the intended audience for such a pharmaceutical, you should be able to have a doctor recognize and respect your expertise as you are the foremost expert in the field of you. And doctors and NPs should not have to fear losing their medical licenses in order to facilitate that. I'm not saying that we should indiscriminately prescribe every and any thing for no medical indication, but as it stands, our medical system rules with a puritanical fist where happiness and stability too often come at the expense of concerns such as "potential for abuse" (ie recreational use, ie self-medication) and diversion. Lord knows I've benefited from some stimulant diversion. It's going to happen as long as these meds exist. What I mean to say is that our system needs more balance.

The first time I went to a psychiatrist, I told her I had done some research and I had suggestions as to what medications would work best for me. And she basically said, "okay, yes." She told me that treating mental disorders is such a game of trial and error that even doctors are shooting in the dark most of the time, so if you have an inkling of what might work best for you then that's as good a place to start as any. I loved her, and then she stopped taking my insurance. But she was right about me being right because I've tried many medications since then and nothing has worked as well as I what I initially prescribed myself via her. The world needs more doctors like her.

In human studies, amphetamines have been shown to reduce cocaine use, but there is a lot less clarity when it comes to meth. Anyway, if you are trying to come off street stimulants and want to try substitution therapy on your own, or if you're just interested in the science like I am, here's some drugs that have been investigated. I've said this before and I'll say it again, but I am in no way a medical professional and in no way qualified to dispense medical advice, so please proceed with caution if you plan to try any of these things without talking to an actual doctor first.

*A note about statistical significance: Statistical significance is what researchers use to determine the likelihood that a relationship between two things is more than just chance. It's a calculation that takes a lot of factors into account to determine whether or not a study hypothesis is correct. One measure of it is called "p-value." Generally speaking, a p-value that is 5% or lower denotes statistical significance. It's represented as "p=0.05"; any number higher than that is usually considered to be statistically insignificant, but it doesn't necessarily mean that there is no causal relationship between the two variables. The smaller the number, the stronger the effect of the variable is on the outcome.

Bupropion (Wellbutrin):

Often prescribed for depression. A clinical trial showed that there may be a slight benefit to Bupropion for occasional meth users (i.e. not daily users), but the dosage was no more than what is typically prescribed for depression. So the data wasn't super compelling. Those who adhered to the Bupropion in this study were more likely to abstain from meth use than those who were also in the Bupropion arm who did not adhere to the medication regime. But the trial was fairly small (less than 100 people) and only lasted twelve weeks. About half of the participants in both arms of the study dropped out before the trial was finished, which suggests some significance on how effective people thought the treatment was.

Another study, which I can't really read because it's behind a paywall, proved that bupropion had a significant effect on post-study abstinence (p= 0.018). These findings have been replicated in several studies. Bupropion has been proven effective at attenuating cocaine addiction when coupled with clinical therapy. It's also proven to help people quit smoking. Seems like a viable option to me, especially if it were prescribed at higher doses than it currently is.

Dextroamphetamine (ProCentra, Zenzedi, or "dexies," as in DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS):

Used to treat ADHD and Narcolepsy. Dexies have been used to treat stimulant dependence in parts of the UK for years with considerable success. Initially, there were concerns about the potential for physical and mental harm from prescribing dex, but several randomized control trials proved it to be safe. In one study, doctors gave participants 60 mg / day. It was shown to be ineffective at reducing methamphetamine use compared with the placebo, but did diminish cravings and withdrawal symptoms. *But* 60mg per day, while on the higher end of what is usually prescribed, is within the range of what is used to treat ADHD. The dose would need to be significantly higher to even make a dent in the dopamine deficit of someone coming off meth.

A 1998 study on replacement therapy for meth injectors found that almost the same number of people prescribed dexies for meth addiction quit injecting by the end of the study as the number of people prescribed methadone for opioid addiction. And a 2010 Australian study found that participants who received long-acting amphetamines stuck with the treatment twice as long and lessened their drug dependence more than those that received a placebo.

Dextroamphetamine and levoamphetamine (Adderall):

I couldn't find a single fucking study that looked at this and I'm vexed by it. Adderall is pretty widely prescribed, but Dexedrine is more potent so it's prescribed less often for that reason. A lot of people report trying Adderall replacement on their own as a safer alternative to meth. Anyway, Adderall is made up mostly of dextroamphetamine and is pretty similar to both ProCentra and Concerta in the way it stimulants the central nervous system, but I think it's worth studying adderall for substitution therapy in a more formal way.

Methylphenidate (Concerta, Ritalin):

Also used to treat ADHD and narcolepsy. Several studies show that monoamine releasers such as Concerta and Ritalin are effective at treating cocaine dependence, but apparently the potential for abuse is too high for most doctors to risk it. This one looks pretty promising in regards to meth treatment. In this study, sustained release capsules were given to the variable group in weekly phases: 18 mg daily in Week 1, 36 mg in Week 2; and 54 mg in Weeks 3–10. Once again, all of these doses fall within range of what is currently prescribed for ADHD and narcolepsy, so again, I would assume there would be much better outcomes at higher doses. Both treatment groups also received group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) once a week and there were small cash incentives for involvement. Retention was a little less than 60% in both arms of the study, but medication compliance was high in both.

Again, there was no difference between the two groups for the primary outcome: number of meth-free days use in the final 30 days of the study. But there were a bunch of secondary outcomes that were notable. The group that received the medication had significantly more meth-free days than the placebo group. This difference was particularly prominent between heavy meth users, and less frequent meth users. The authors conclude: *"Against the background of many negative medication trials for MA use disorder, we believe that these findings are clinically important and relevant."*

Modafinil (Provigil):

Is a "wakefulness supporting agent" according to rxlist.com. It's prescribed for narcolepsy. Modafinil has demonstrated only limited efficacy as a replacement therapy for both cocaine and meth. One study for meth replacement tested 400 mg of Provigil against the control group—and the results trended towards the positive, but none of them were statistically significant. Again 400 mg / day is already within range (higher end) of a typical dose for narcolepsy and ADHD.

Mirtazapine (Remeron and Remeronsoltab):

Is an antidepressant that was shown to reduce meth use in one study. The primary purpose of this study was to see if mirtazapine would affect HIV seroconversion among men who have sex with men by reducing sexual health risks associated with meth use. The authors analyzed a lot of different outcomes and concluded: *"The addition of mirtazapine to substance use counseling decreased methamphetamine use among active users and was associated with decreases in sexual risk despite low to moderate medication adherence."* If you look more closely at the results, you can see that they all suggest that mirtazapine reduced meth use, but once again, none of the results were statistically significant.

Prometa:

Is a protocol that combines Gabapentin, Flumazenil and hydroxyzine. All of these drugs are FDA approved, though the combination of the three to treat stimulant addiction, which would be Prometa's on-label purpose, is not FDA approved. A few studies found that it was highly successful at treating meth dependence, but those studies just so happened to be funded by Hythiam, the company that makes Prometa. Other, independent studies have shown it not to be effective. The protocol is currently being piloted by some doctors so results are TBA.

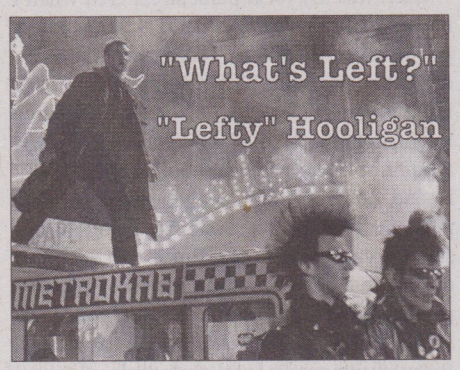
Vaccines:

Vaccines that would "protect" against methamphetamine use are currently being developed. It would work similarly to how Vivitrol works on opioids and alcohol—a once-monthly shot that blocks psychoactive effects, meaning that you won't be able to feel the high from meth if you use it while on the vaccine. Honestly, this sounds like a gross waste of time and money to me, so I refuse to investigate further at this point.

Cognitive therapy and and residential treatment

Therapy and residential treatment still remain the gold standard to treat stimulant addiction, and evidence backs this up. However, these interventions don't provide any support for the chemical imbalances that are being worked out in your brain while coming off stimulants, and it's clear that many if not most patients would benefit from a combination of cognitive and pharmacological therapies.

Have you tried any of these things? How did it go for you? Other harm reduction topics you want covered here? Other inquiries? Reach me at dearauntiehazel@gmail.com



Whenever I'm out and about wearing my *MRR* t-shirt, aside from comments like "cool shirt," I get questions. "Are they still around?" (Yep, 37 years and counting.) "Where can I get a copy?" (Order a copy online or buy one in select stores.) And, very rarely: "How can I help *MRR* out?" Here's my rather lengthy answer to that last question.

GIVE MONEY

Money is the most and least important way you can help *MRR*. Most important because, as the song goes, "money makes the world go 'round." Money is crucial to the production of the magazine and the survival of the overall project. But it's also the least important element because people frequently give money without doing anything else, often to assuage their guilt for not doing anything else. We're still glad to take your cash, and there are several ways to give it to us.

NO STRINGS ATTACHED: Just give us the money. In the old days, punks would send *MRR* cash in the mail. Of course, it was in payment for subscriptions or records or what have you, but the result was that Tim Yo had lots of spare cash to use without reporting it to the Feds. Those days are long gone and we don't recommend you send us money via the post. But if you don't need your donation to be tax deductible, then just send us a check or money order. Sorry, *MRR* doesn't do BitCoin. *TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS: MRR* is a not-for-profit, not a nonprofit. You can't give us money directly if you want it to be tax deductible. Fortunately, we partner with a great little nonprofit, San Francisco All-Ages Art & Music Project (SFAAAMP), which is a legit 501(c)(3). You can send your donation to SFAAAMP, c/o John Downing, 3653 24th Street, Ste. 2, San Francisco, CA 94110. Make sure to mark it for *MRR*.

MRR is also happy to exchange product for money. It's called commerce, and there are several ways you can purchase stuff from us. *BUY SINGLE ISSUES:* We can sell you single issues or multiples of any single issue—current or back issue—so long as it's still in stock. They make great gifts for friends and family. There are deals for six back issues, and you can download PDFs of the current issue and select back issues online. *SUBSCRIBE:* This is the best way to get your copy of the magazine. Subscriptions are available for six and twelve months respectively. Not only do you get it for a discounted price, subscribing gives us a steady dependable income we can count on for the duration of your subscription. Gift subscriptions for friends and family are also awesome. *OTHER PRODUCTS: MRR* offers records and comps, as well as lots of great t-shirts, for you to buy. We give away free buttons and stickers when you purchase stuff from us. *ADVERTISE:* If you have something punk related (music, zine, book, etc.) advertise it in the pages of *MRR*. Our rates are cheap. Depending on what you do, we can do an ad exchange. *ROUND UP:* A six month subscription sent to anywhere in the US costs $26.00. Why not round up to an even $30? Most of our styling t-shirts go for $15

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apiece. Why not round up to $20? That's the idea. *DO A BENEFIT:* You can organize your own benefit for *MRR* in your local scene, or have your band play a show to benefit *MRR*. You can even sell *MRR* at local shows and we'll send you a bundle.

LEND SUPPORT

There are lots of ways to support *MRR* non-monetarily. Whenever you find the magazine at your local record shop or bookstore, make sure to tell them how glad you are to find *MRR* there. If your favorite record shop or bookstore doesn't carry us, ask them to do so. See if your local library will carry us. *MRR* is on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Like us, follow us, comment on and repost our stuff on your social media. Mention and review us on websites, blogs, podcasts, and everywhere possible on the internet. Do the same in the remaining analog media like print magazines, newspapers, and books. If you do a zine, mention us, review us, and put up a free *MRR* ad. Patronize the businesses who distribute the magazine and patronize our advertisers. Make sure they know you like us. Attend *MRR* Presents shows and events. Listen to and follow *Maximum Rocknroll Radio* online and on your local radio station. If your radio station doesn't carry the radio show, ask them to do so. Tell the bands, labels, authors, zine publishers, etc. you like that you saw them in the pages of *MRR*. And send us your music, zines, books, comics, etc. so we can review your stuff in the magazine.

VOLUNTEER YOURSELF

There are shitworkers, reviewers, columnists, and coordinators listed on *MRR*'s first two Top Ten pages, but we're all volunteers. I like to divide the volunteers into two basic categories: *In It for the Glory* and *Behind the Scenes*. *In It For The Glory* are volunteers who want to see their names in print reviewing records, demos, books, zines and movies, doing interviews, recording radio shows, listing top tens, and writing columns. *Behind the Scenes* are volunteers who do things for *MRR* without wanting credit in the magazine. That includes picking up the mail, distributing the magazine locally, to subscribers, and internationally, green taping and filing records, cleaning up the office, tabling at events, putting on shows or other events, coordinating various departments of the magazine, and coordinating the entire magazine. Of course, volunteers can be in both categories. I used to be listed as a shitworker under "George Impulse" and as a columnist under "Lefty Hooligan" until the coordinators made me decide how I wanted to be credited. Being the glory hound that I am, I opted for columnist. All *MRR*'s volunteer positions are open to anyone who wants to step up, provided you have a commitment to the magazine and punk rock. *In It for the Glory* volunteers should also be informative, entertaining, and provocative in whatever they write or record for *MRR*. At their most basic, *Behind the Scenes* volunteers can just show up and do their job. Those *Behind the Scenes* volunteers who coordinate specific departments or who coordinate the whole enterprise need to be vetted by *MRR* as a whole because they are responsible for running and producing the magazine. In general, volunteers should be consistent and dependable because nobody likes a flake. But any punk can and should volunteer for *MRR* if you want to support us.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SCENE

I've always been into weird, edgy bands—DEVIANTS, 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS, the UP, MC5—so getting into punk wasn't a stretch when I lived in San Diego. I can't remember whether I saw the RAMONES at San Diego State University in December, 1978, or October, 1979, as my first ever punk rock show. I was a heavy drinker in those days, so things are hazy. I was a regular at San Diego's Skeleton and Zebra Clubs. I did a two-sided broadside called *Point-Blank* (subtitled *An Anarchist No Wave Monthly*) in 1984 and a regular zine called *San Diego's Daily Impulse* (an anti-authoritarian news journal that went from bimonthly to quarterly and then to monthly) from 1985 through 1989. I regularly tabled at shows and progressive events and organized two Anarchy Picnics at Balboa Park and one Hardcore Picnic at Mariner's Point that turned into a full blown riot. I put on several benefit shows and helped set up various anarchist affinity groups and anti-authoritarian organizations, including the short-lived Borderlands Anti-Authoritarian Community and a chapter of Anti-Racist Action.

Such was my local punk street cred when I moved to the Bay Area in 1991. I immediately got involved with *MRR*. Not exactly the Bible of punk rock despite Tim Yo's tongue-in-cheek issue touting that status, *MRR* was a leading international magazine of punk rock that made a point of covering local punk scenes. It still is and does, despite the general decline of print media and punk music. So, by all means, support your local scene. But if you do a zine or play in a band or put on shows or record a podcast or whatever else you do in your local scene, send it to *MRR*. We'd love to cover it. By supporting your local punk rock scene you can support *MRR*.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA: *You can download free EPUB, MOBI, PDF, and DOCX files of my latest cyberpunk mystery story* The Death of David Pickett *at 62milepress.com/the-death-of-david-pickett. To find links to my blogs, websites, Facebook, and Instagram, visit my social media aggregator at gamatiasz.com. You can purchase copies of my near-future science fiction thriller* 1% Free *through either site.*

To punks of the smart, socially-conscious persuasion, ALICE BAG is about as dynamic an icon as you will find. A first-generation Chicana from Los Angeles, Alice began writing and performing music at the age of eight in English and Spanish; this need for wild expression eventually developing into her work as singer for the legendary, innovative punk band the BAGS (1977–1981). In the mid-'80s, Alice's political activism and desire to enact positive change in her community eventually led her down the path towards teaching, a career she pursued for decades. All the while, she has remained an active punk musician (in CHOLITA!, STAY AT HOME BOMB, ALICE BAG BAND, and other projects), became a mother, and has written the acclaimed books Violence Girl *and* Pipe Bomb For The Soul.

In part two of this two-part interview, Alice talks about immigration, xenophobia, and "assimilation"; the intersections of punk and teaching; taking time off to write; and her work with Chicas Rockeras. You will be able to read the entire unabridged interview in the upcoming Teaching Resistance *book, available in Fall 2019 on PM Press!*
Interviewer: John No

[Part I in the previous issue of MRR]

MRR: How did you talk to your own students about immigration? Did you often talk about being the child of immigrants?

I worked to create a classroom where children felt safe and supported, not just by me but by each other. We spoke about their experiences if they were comfortable speaking about them. I also reached out to the school psychologist for help with students who had been traumatized by either the war in their country of origin, the immigration experience or by any other experience. I spoke often about my immigrant parents and about learning English in school, just like them. I wanted my students to know that we had a lot in common.

MRR: I read an interview with you where you talked about the importance of children developing their first language. What are some ways teachers can validate their students and celebrate their languages and cultures and push back against the homogenizing assimilationist agenda that American society so often demands?
Yes, I firmly believe that developing a child's primary language will produce better results than truncating that development. We can build on a sturdy foundation of rich language much quicker and more successfully than building on fragmented language.

As for ways in which teachers can validate their students' language and culture, of course by including it in everyday use, but oral language is just one form of communication. A lot can be expressed through patience and kindness. We also understand each other through our actions and expressions. A teacher who does not understand the language of the student can convey approval or disapproval through nonverbal cues.

MRR: What are some ways that teachers can help non-immigrant students to themselves push back against the ugly racism of much of the U.S.'s attitudes towards immigrants, particularly immigrants from Latin America, and confront their own prejudices? What are some of the ways in which this can become complicated, in your classroom experience (for example, when the students expressing xenophobia are from other marginalized classes, such as other POC)?
I honestly believe that the more dialogue there is in the classroom, the more safe and inclusive it can be. Students need to be able to process statements and points of view that they've heard at home or in their communities without being judged. They need to have the opportunity to practice critical thinking skills, all skills need to be practiced to stay sharp. Xenophobia is not a topic that can simply be suppressed or swept under the rug; we need to shine a spotlight on it because it cannot stand up to scrutiny. Also, it's important to note that xenophobia is expressed in mainstream as well as marginalized groups. Sometimes, the oppressed learn to be the oppressor. The teacher needs to create an environment where questioning is productive and helps students reach rational conclusions. We also need to allow for divergent points of view. Teaching kids to have respectful dialogue is very empowering and a valuable life lesson.

MRR: How can a teacher help students to be more empathetic and positive, to find greater solidarity between students who have systemically oppressed, marginalized identities—POC, queer, immigrants, etc?—and draw greater empathy from those who are not marginalized?
I don't know, maybe have them play on a team together or play music together. Learning to depend on others is a trust building exercise. I don't play sports, but the people I have played in bands with usually become like extended family to me. I trust them onstage and off.

MRR: What were key differences between teaching in California and teaching in Arizona?
UTLA: having a strong teacher's union made a very big difference. I enjoyed working in both states, but I felt much more supported in California. I had a teacher assistant, I made more money, I had better access to classroom materials, science and art supplies. I believe all those perks came from having a strong union. However, both states have a very long way to go before they do right by teachers, students, and parents. We need smaller classes, more support in the classroom, materials beyond textbooks, access to professional growth opportunities, music and art classes, and teachers need to be paid like they're the guardians of our most precious resource, because they are!

MRR: What are the greatest lessons your students taught you?
My students made me a better person. I was very impatient before becoming a teacher, quick to judge and not very tactful when communicating displeasure. Working with children made me take responsibility for how I interact with others, regardless of their actions. Children are innocent; they make honest mistakes, and I always felt it was up to me to step up and be patient, to be clear about my expectations, to be consistent in providing structure and discipline, to help them understand that mistakes are OK. It's easy to feel that way about children, but the thing is that after a few years, I learned I could be more patient with adults as well. Not completely patient, I'm not there yet, but I'm not as snappy as I used to be.

MRR: Do you know a lot of punk teachers? Are there any punk teachers who have been inspirational for you, or helped inspire you in your own teaching?
I don't know a lot of teachers who are into punk music. I do know a good number of college professors who are very punk. One person who inspires me is Marin Joshua Vee, the founder of Chicas Rockeras SELA, a girls' rock camp in Southeast Los Angeles. She and her comadres created a mentorship program where young girls can learn to own their power, where they can feel the strength and support of other women, where they can learn how to have dialogue and work with other young girls. On top of that, they get to form a band, write a song, and perform in front of wildly enthusiastic fans. I am very inspired by what Marin has created; she sets the tone for camp every year, and every year it floors me.

MRR: You were a teacher for over twenty years, until 2011, the year *Violence Girl* was released. What brought about this major change in your life? How have things changed for you since then?
When *Violence Girl* came out, I made the decision to take time off from teaching. I did this for the sake of the students. I knew that I wanted to tour and support my book, but I didn't want to take time off from the classroom and leave my students with substitutes. Students need to have consistency, and a book tour would impede that, so I decided to take a year off from teaching. I fully planned to return to it, but something unexpected happened: professors began assigning my book to their students. I discovered that by visiting classrooms in colleges and universities across the country, I was still engaging with students. It was a different age group, but every bit as satisfying, so I decided to keep doing it.

MRR: Tell us some details about Chicas Rockeras, how you (a very experienced teacher) help to facilitate a powerful education experience through the Girls Rock Camp model in a camp oriented towards young Latinx kids. What's the difference between teaching at Chicas Rockeras and teaching in a classroom?
Chicas Rockeras doesn't really have a music centered curriculum; the curriculum is about female empowerment. I wish all classes were more about the whole child instead of inputting information. I probably focus more on teaching music and performance than some of the other volunteers because I'm used to a lot of structure, but I'm learning to ease up and not worry so much about whether they can play. It's more important that the girls figure out what they want to express and that they know someone will listen.

MRR: I read an interview where you talked about having "Teacher Damage"—the compulsion to educate, well outside the classroom. What do you hope to be able to accomplish, education-wise, today and in the future?
[laughter] I do have teacher damage! I want to challenge people to think, to question, to foster dialogue with others who don't share their point of view, to find common ground, create change, shape their world and speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves,

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and to save our planet for future generations.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers / educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education, particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com

–John No, Teaching Resistance editor

I'm back, baby! Sorry to all of my loyal fans who have been begging for my column to return. I have been busy putting together an entire fucking issue of this magazine every month. I've learned my lesson and from now on promise to let the rest of the magazine fall to shit and just focus on writing some inane bullshit in this space every month.

It's fucking hard to write about music! The attempt to try to to put into words what one hears, feels, senses while listening to music often seems impossible. So when someone does a good job of it, it really makes you (okay, it makes *me*) sit up straight and pay attention.

I was recently revisiting my favorite piece of music writing, a group of thought-provoking essays that delve into the deeper meanings and implications of the songs discussed, pieces that truly force one to consider topics as diverse as Roland Barthes's literary theory and the societal factors that form our ideas of "good" and "bad" taste. I am speaking, of course, of Emily Bartlett Hines's sublime website, Bubblegum Reviews, on which she attempted to review every song on the 40-volume *Bubblegum Motherfucker* bootleg compilation series. (Before quitting in 2016, she made it 67 songs in, which is more than any of us could probably stand.) The entire site is a wonder; Emily's takes on the songs are firmly tongue-in-cheek, but also worthy of serious consideration. Is the SWEET's titular "Lollipop Man" a Lacanian phallic symbol? There are two answers, both completely valid: *no*, it's a stupid bubblegum song manufactured for children, but also *yes*, yes it definitely is.

Anyway, while I could write an entire column about how good the site is, and probably a book-length essay about what I see as the relationship between '60s bubblegum and punk music (so opposed in ethos, yet so fundamentally intertwined in musical approach!!), the *actual* topic of this month's column, which I swear I will be getting to soon, stems from a tidbit thrown into a review. It was only on my second read-through of the site that I fully grasped the following idea: the group that did the soft 'gum classic "Angela" began life as the COACHMEN before being forced to change their name to the one we all know and love, PROFESSOR MORRISON'S LOLLIPOP.

Let's really think about this one. If someone said to you "I bought a COACHMEN record today," on the surface you'd be like "oh cool" but you'd actually be silently wracking your brain to try to figure out which middle-of-the-road garage rock band they were talking about. You'd be confusing them with the COACHWHIPS or maybe the CONMEN or fucking 17,000 other bands with essentially the same name. Now let's say your friend goes "I bought a PROFESSOR MORRISON'S LOLLIPOP record today." In this scenario you're going to have one of two reactions: "'Angela' or 'Oo-Poo-Pah Susie'?" or, more likely, "what the fuck is PROFESSOR MORRISON'S LOLLIPOP?!" Either you know it or you don't, and if you don't, then you really don't know *what* the fuck that band could be. I mean, this record came out literally 50 years ago, and there still hasn't been another band called PROFESSOR MORRISON'S LOLLIPOP since then. *And yet*, when we were assigning records for review this month, there were multiple times we had to stop and try to figure out if it was a band we were familiar with, or a different band with the same. It usually turned out to be a different band that had just chosen either a name that was already taken or a name that was so unoriginal that we immediately confused it with six others.

I hereby declare that *in 2019, there is no excuse for unimaginative band names*. Get more creative, dickheads! Stop settling for COACHMEN-level band names and start aspiring to PROFESSOR MORRISON'S LOLLIPOP status!

If you are a garage rocker trying to choose between naming your band the SECRET BOYS or the FIREMEN, your band is now called DR. EXLEY'S FULL ARMOR BODYSUIT.

If you can't decide whether to name your band the DRUNK FUCKS or POISON CONTROL, worry no more: you are now called THE COAL MINE CATASTROPHE OF 1842.

If your D-beat band is stuck between DISCONTROL and DISSORROW, congratulations, your new name is DIS-UNCLE JACK'S POTATO SALAD.

There is a whole world of words out there for you. There are nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and more...and that's just the English language! I mean, name your band whatever the fuck you want, but for chrissakes, just please make it something that I'll be able to remember twenty minutes after you tell me. Make it something I won't get confused with sixteen other bands who have sent us records in the past month. I mean, ideally you'd make your *music* memorable, but failing that, at least give me something to work with in the realm of band names. Okay, *ciao*, can't wait to see all your band names next month!

***

END NOTES:

- The Bubblegum Reviews blog can be found at bubblegumreviews.wordpress.com if you're interested.
- Discogs lists 30+ bands called the COACHMEN, including one that Thurston Moore was apparently in. Who cares! Get better names, all of you!
- Don't fucking step to me about any of my own bands' names, they have all been beautiful and perfect and *I said this is a new rule for 2019*

***

REJECTED COLUMN TOPICS:

- Life sucks
- Shit's hard
- Fuck everything
- I hate winter why's it dark already what the fuck is this bullshit

***

Email me at miranda@maximumrocknroll.com and say whatever it is you wanna sayyyyy

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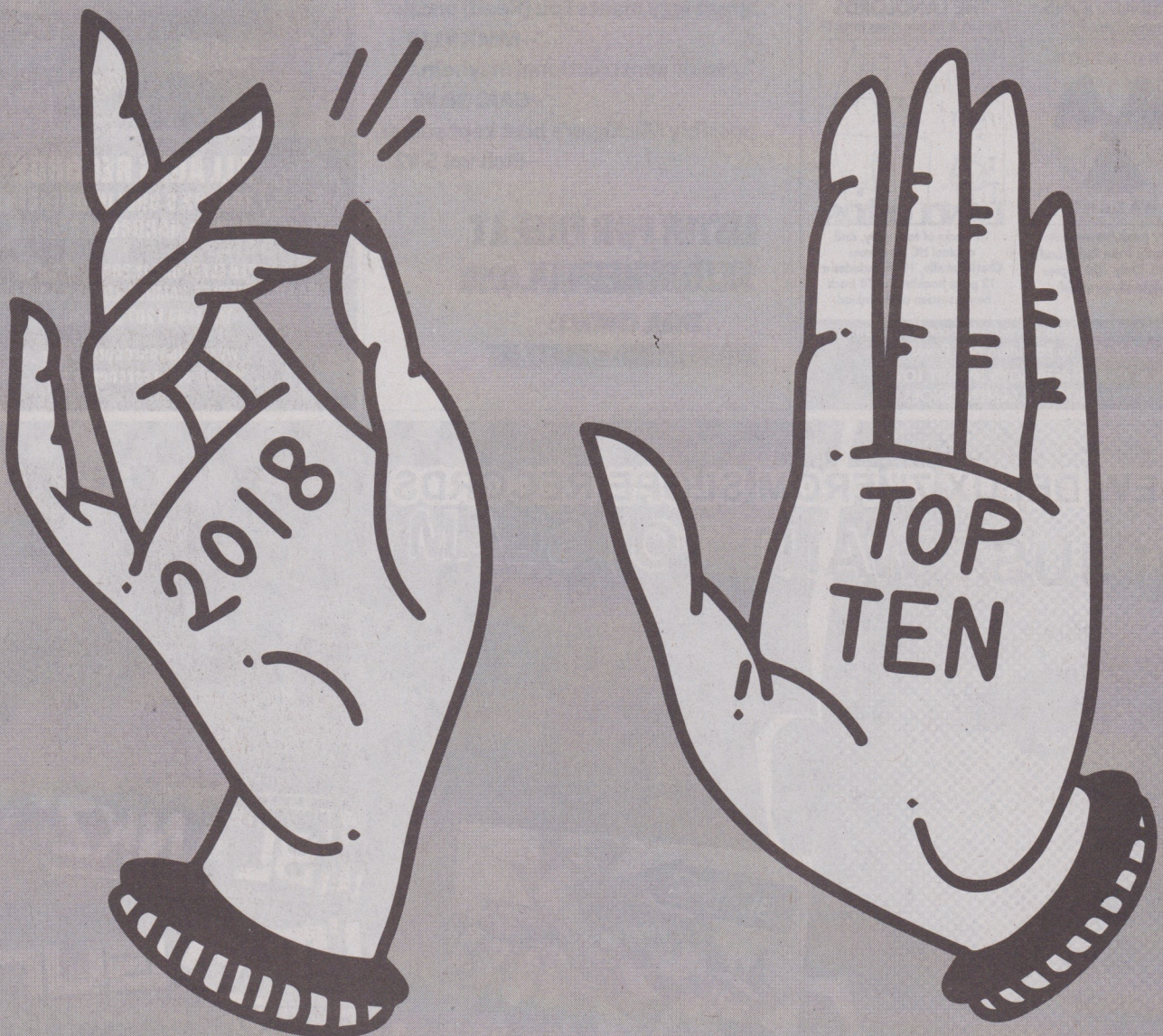
Well, 2018 seemed to follow the trend as late in being a totally shit year. But luckily for all of us, we've got punk music to get us through! We've once again asked our shitworkers and trusted friends to give us some insight into their favorite releases of the year. If you're feeling down, perhaps the following can inspire you. Here's hoping that things start to look up in 2019.



Illustrations and typesetting done by Nirzar Pangarkar

GRACE AMBROSE

Grace Ambrose is a former content coordinator of Maximum Rocknroll. She sings in NEON and runs Thrilling Living Records.

Plays CB Radio Gorgeous
CB RADIO GORGEOUS
CS *Not Normal Tapes*

Feral
CHILD'S POSE
EP *Nervous Energy*

Mostrame Lo Peor
FORRA
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

GAZ
GAZ
CS *self released*

Another Side of the Number Ones
THE NUMBER ONES
EP *Sorry State / Static Shock*

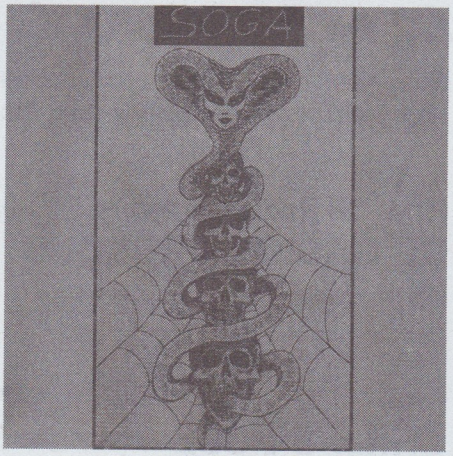
Strong Throat
PIG DNA
EP *Square One Again*

Todo Está Corrompido
PIÑÉN
CS *self released*

Primo Amici
PRIMO!
LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

Positions of Power
RUNT
LP *La Vida es un Mus*

SOGA
SOGA
CS *self-released*



BRYONY BEYNON

Bryony Beynon is still alive and despite what you might reasonably have assumed, is still a columnist for Maximum Rocknroll.

I split myself over the hemispheres this year. A visa expired so I lost access to Tamarama Beach, the coconut ice drink at Delish in Marrickville, and a support network and moved back to London. Worked in a record shop (shout out Repressed in Newtown, Sydney!), which opened my sonic universe wider than these pages care about, then went on tour with BB AND THE BLIPS in the USA and remembered what I like and don't like through a process of elimination. Honestly, this could also be a live top ten, as I've seen all these bands at least once this year, and I think that's where I am at. If you can't bring it in the fully flesh form then don't come at me with the black circles. Here's a short list of punk that still banged my battered old drum this year.

Spiraling
SPECIAL INTEREST
LP *Raw Sugar*

I was under Alli, who grabbed at the smug core of a crowd of party kids in a Laundromat in New Orleans, where this band is from, and gutted them with the truth. The set stopped but the rage did not. A sermon to an unconscious crowd, who were suddenly aware of the drop in temperature. They were paralyzed, staring at the ground while Alli was perched atop a washing machine, laying down lines of cold fury and the unspeakable wages of grief. Sucker punched by gravity. What are you willing to give up to make it stop? I listened and pressed my palm against the lens of a man trying to photograph what was happening. Afterwards he apologized for even considering it. SPECIAL INTEREST knows these cruel and callous reflexes. The most profoundly real, antagonistic and vital thing I've ever seen happen at a punk show...since the SI set I saw the week before. We're on that level here, people. The performance is no longer the performance and the disruption is the disruption but you will become disrupted and it will not suffice, you will not suffice. SPECIAL INTEREST bring the eternal, the absolute now-sound, the truth that the youth need. TRUST NO WAVE.

Primo Amici
PRIMO!
LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

A true genius womanchine from Melbourne. Shiny like a slicker RAINCOATS. GRASS WIDOW but the palms are immortal plastic slightly sun-bleached, and no one has died. The sound of moving house, the sound of the everyday hustle bustle, driving past people living their lives. Rushing through a Thursday where you've got to make ends meet. Unassuming joy sounds you might dig into and never stop playing. Balance it out with walks by the sea, balance it out with little luxuries.

Living In Excellence
CONSTANT MONGREL
LP *Anti-Fade / La Vida Es Un Mus*

It's all about dat bass, there's a campiness and a burliness which sits in some contemporary lineage with bands like LOW LIFE and the church of a lower frequency rumble. The 'GREL manage to be arch, sarcastic, and knowing about their sounds, not trying for anything which could pass for five ten or god forbid twenty years back. Fried sax does its dreamiest job over a grunty chorus all over this album. Bands referencing New York Hardcore knowing they sound nothing like that in their press sheets almost daring stupid reviewers to look that up and try to reference it is my jam. So are "The Law" and "Puffy Jacket" but tbh I love it all.

John Sharp Toro
THE NATIVE CATS
LP *RIP Society*

Chloe Alison Escott; a true mind of her generation. (You should look up her stand up, too.) So careful yet so caustic and not afraid to name it, not afraid to not be sure of everything. A breath of fresh air in a wind tunnel. Two humans from some craggy trauma island not so far from the South Pole (Tasmania) use bass, voice, and melodica to melt through situational un-pop tunes which are always pleasingly indirect about their subject matter. Watching Julian try to self-consciously hawk CD-Rs of a local Hobart band compilation from the stage of the fuckin Sydney Opera House to the assembled ticketed seats was somehow the perfect allegory of what makes Australia's iteration of punk such a uniquely ridiculous and brilliant thing.

Pork Sword Fever
COLD MEAT
EP *Helta Skelta / Static Shock*

Wrote about this band already but I love them dearly so yeah you'll take it again. COLD MEAT hail from Perth, Western Australia, but truly these are siren songs for every woman getting fucked over in every corner of this sorry planet, oozing total defiance and sneering, caustic rage across five certified slappers. They hex lazy pricks and bad bastards with a spell of spectacular jangeloid riffs and clattering anarcho toms, each track upping the stakes like a praying mantis—fuck, decapitate, eat corpse for nourishment. COLD MEAT will have you fisting the air, but only if you lube up first.

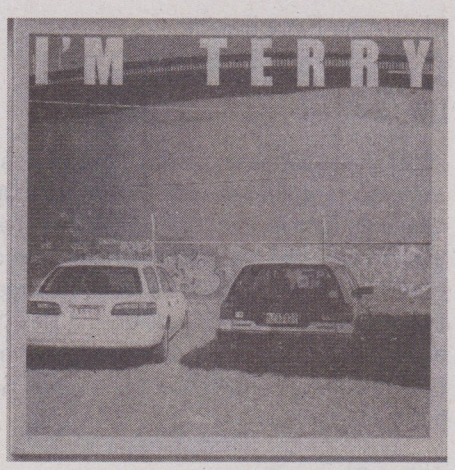
Feral
CHILD'S POSE
EP *Nervous Energy*

Let's get feral let's get feral. I wrote about this band before I could watch them and I had envisioned something more playful, something joyous, not the mild threat of the kids (who are old, but we are all old now) gone wild. Class-clown chants of caustic, this is affecting pop that blend elastic snark with darker energies. A short single that's still a fully-realized curriculum of dynamic, surprising, stop-start punk rock. There's a manic rush of hopeful, delayed gratification in these songs, like drawing a smiley face on a cracked egg full of soil and seeds. Check in every day. Yes, you're getting warmer. You're feeling better.

Positions of Power
RUNT

LP *La Vida es un Mus*

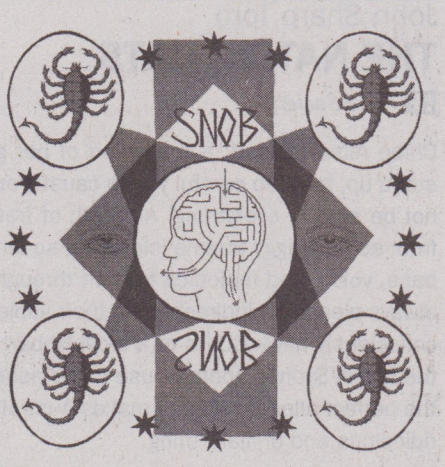
Honestly I heard this record last year and it was YETT material then and remains so in hard copy form! Absolute burst blood vessel incantations against the insidious bureaucratic evil of the British state, brittle hardcore to soundtrack your righteous reprisal. Burrowing deep, coming up blank, foaming, raging.



I'm Terry
TERRY

LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

The Moving quartet. The absolute ABBA Unit. The oat milk communists. TERRY just keeps doing it, but the formula never feels sticky and they could go anywhere. You can travel the world, but you'll still be TERRY. Perfectly in love with the mundane, cruising through the doom reality of life in a broken colony (what is a working colony?) TERRY's always wondering how he ended up here. How do you live and love honestly on an island where your presence is a result of unspeakable violence? And then how do you make music without marinating in refracted guilt so much that you can't do or be anything of use to anyone? How to skewer this bind with a raised eyebrow, name the problem, shame the problem? You find the TERRY way.



Snob
SNOB

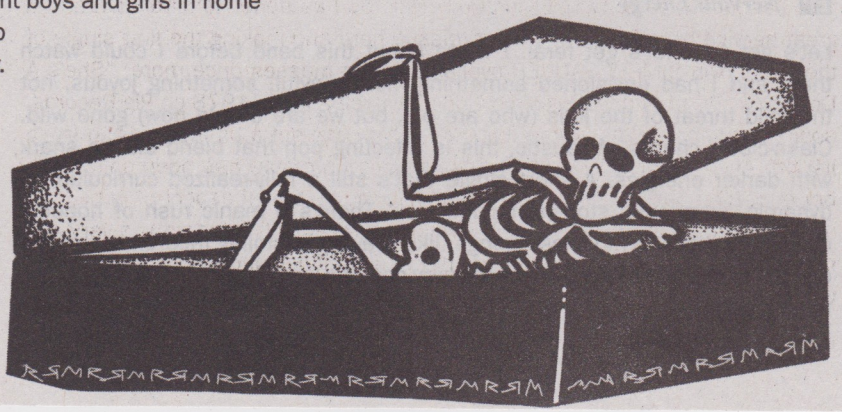
LP *La Vida es un Mus*

A rollicking bin fire from start to finish. A bin on fire that's full of Tesco value vegan sausages and low-to-medium range sex toy packaging covered in coffee grounds. SNOB makes their hardcore punk rock in London, amidst the city's glittering fuck wands which protrude from medieval swamp, out of place and out of time. You can tell. They've upped the ante considerably with this record, and if you don't have it, that's a real problem for you.

Warm Bodies
WARM BODIES

LP *Lumpy*

Livin' in a bod. Whatever "freak punk" was turned itself inside out looking for something and died not a moment too soon. WARM BODIES is a whole other arena, but using the word freaky to describe them feels horrifically gauche so I shan't. The kids who ate the crayons, the silent mutant boys and girls in home corner, the brave losers. I couldn't tell if Olivia Gibb was a performance artist or not. It's a 24/7 reality.



▪ BIFF BIFFARO

MRR columnist / Feral Kid Records / Brown Sugar

Another year has come and gone. Every time I've sat down to figure out a list of my favorite releases for any given year I have a moment where I think "Geez, did anything good come out this year? Do I like any new records?" Almost instantly I realize how completely moronic of a thought that is as I begin mentally flipping through all the records that I have really dug over the previous twelve months. I love a pretty wide array of punk and hardcore, but it is very apparent to me that this year, the idiotic has really taken over, and, as an idiot, I couldn't be happier. I will be listing these off by region rather than in any numeric order of favorites.

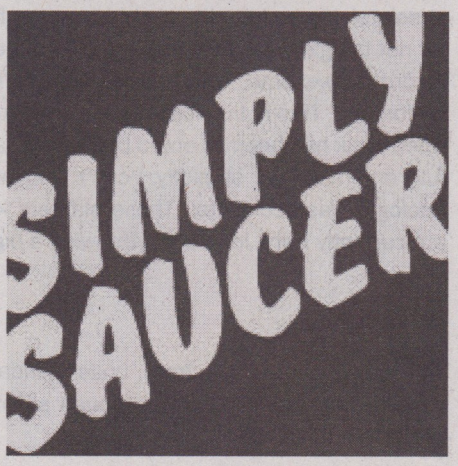
CANADA

One of my favorite things to happen this year was going on a rather extensive tour on the eastern end of Canada. I'm finding it a bit difficult not to make a Top Tens list of all the awesome people we hung out with, bands we played with, or ranking the best veggie dogs consumed at different Canada Tire locations, but I will stick to listing a few of the killer records I became aware of from the region.

Here Come
TOMMY AND THE COMMIES

LP *Slovenly Recordings*

Having never heard of this trio from Sudbury, Ontario, a friend dropped the needle on the LP, excited to show off this unknown gem to me. I was instantly hooked. The songs sounded memorable from the first listen, and they don't get old. Somehow we seem to have gotten to a point where it feels like so many people are dying to live in the past and worship music from days gone by, even with bands as recent as the EXPLODING HEARTS. Tommy, along with his Red-blooded friends, gives a nice reminder that catchy mod-punk / power pop / whatever you wanna call it can still be fresh and exciting without feeling like a carbon copy.



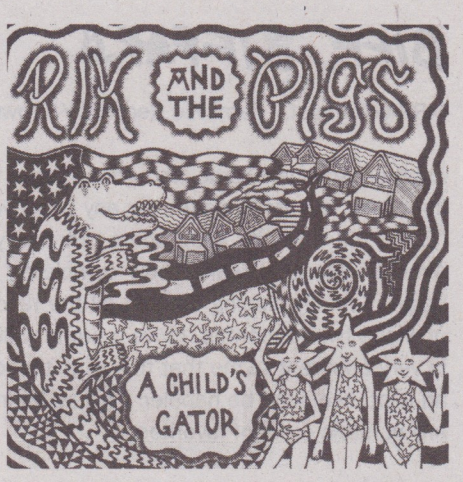
She's A Dog / I Can Change My Mind
SIMPLY SAUCER

LP *Schizophrenic*

Like most punkers, I can't seem to get enough of late '70s / early '80s punk. I consider myself to be a bit of an expert of this style from my neck of the woods, and whenever I travel I get excited to talk to fellow weirdos from other cities who have a similar love and obsession over that musical realm from their respective region. Schizophrenic Records has done Hamilton, Ontario a great service by putting out a killer reissue here and making the first single of their very own SIMPLY SAUCER available to the masses once more. "She's A Dog" b/w "I Can Change My Mind," originally released in 1978 on Pig Records, spans a number of different sub-genres which can get a bit annoying to try to list off. Anything I can possibly say about this I am sure has been said much better before, but if you're like me and love the historical aspect of punk, this reissue is definitely for you. Simplistic but lovely packaging featuring a very well re-created cover, which is pretty spot on to the original, and a cool little booklet with a writeup by the band's bassist help to really put this over.

OLYMPIA, WA

Over the last few years I have gotten very close to and started dating someone from Olympia, WA. Planning trips out west to visit her also meant that I had the opportunity to catch a number of pretty killer bands in their hometown.



A Child's Gator

RIK AND THE PIGS

LP *Total Punk*

If you've been paying attention at all over the last few years, Rik has clearly shown up on your radar by now. With and without his loyal hog boys, every Rik record so far has been top notch. This LP is no different, eight more songs including full band renditions of "(Baby I'm) Electric" and "Dear Ricky," which originally caught my ear on the solo RIK EP on Lumpy Records last year. The PIGS were easily one of the highlights for me at the 2017 Not Dead Yet festival in Toronto and have been great every time I have seen them since. I was lucky enough to find myself in Olympia a day before the band's west coast tour began and got to catch them perform at a bowling alley to a somewhat less than stoked crowd. I, however, couldn't have been happier.

Public Apology

ELECTRIC CHAIR

EP *Stucco*

Having already seen the mighty BETA BOYS a number of times, the last time I visited Olympia I was excited to learn that two of the members had started a new band and they would be playing while I was in town. ELECTRIC CHAIR absolutely floored me live and I spent the better part of my trip kicking myself for not bringing my recording setup with me to help them record a demo. This record is awesome. It somehow captures the urgency the band exudes when performing. This is timeless hardcore punk made by idiots, for idiots. In a time when punk has been co-opted by intellectuals, ELECTRIC CHAIR has the gall to fully embrace their stupidity. I can't imagine them naming their record "Public Apology" was accidental. These blasters know exactly what kind of world we are currently living in and are throwing a big "fuck you" to it all.

UPSTATE, NY

This being where I am from, understandably I spend a lot of time there. A few releases from this area, though slightly self-serving, seem well worth a mention on this list.

Wild & Mean

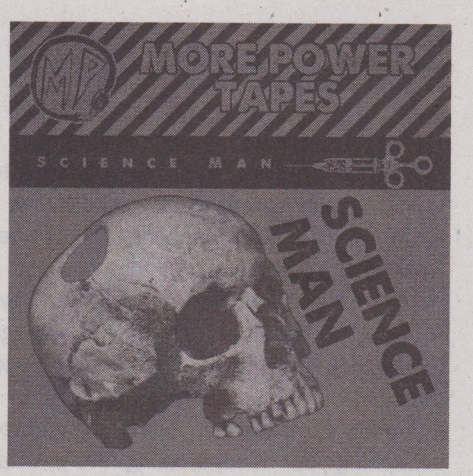
MYSTERY GIRL

EP *Feral Kid*

Being asked to do a year end best of list is a little difficult for me considering I run a label myself. At the risk of seeming a bit conceited here, I would hate myself a little bit if I didn't mention the MYSTERY GIRL EP that I helped release because in my mind it most certainly belongs on such a list. MYSTERY GIRL hails from Albany, NY and is hands down the best throwback power pop band I have ever seen to date. Seeing this band since early on in their inception, I have watched them undergo an incredible transformation as they have become the powerhouse that they are now. I expect to see big things from this band, and this debut vinyl release is just the start.

Science Man
SCIENCE MAN

CS *More Power Tapes*



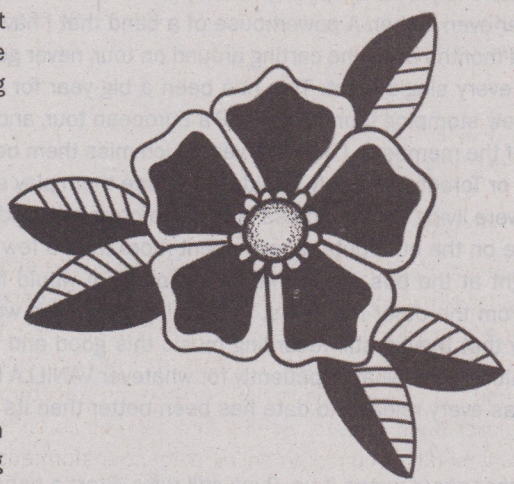
SCIENCE MAN is quite possibly the best band in Buffalo, NY, and it is only one person. I have been close to this project from the very first spark of an idea and could tell from the start that it was going to be something special. Most of the songs on this demo were recorded in the back of my van while I was driving on tour with bands that this scientific individual and I have played in together. Glancing up into the rear-view mirror I would see this mad man hammering away on one of our instruments or tapping frantically on his recording interface powered directly off my vans battery. Having seen every step of where it came from, when I was shown the final product of these songs I was baffled, and have multiple times since stated that "these songs have no business being as good as they are." While the demo tape is great, the live show is really next level, complete with timed lighting effects, unexpectedly full sounding backing tracks played through any number of different amps giving it a full band feel, and varying degrees of dangerous science experiments performed over top of an instrumental track.

St. Louis / Kansas City / Outer Space

Miss Lady
MISS LADY

CS *Fish*

One of the coolest things I was a part of this past year was the unexpectedly well-received Accidental Fest. Having been asked by six different touring bands to book them for the same date, a group of us decided to make this Wednesday night in August in the small town of Buffalo a festival with far too many bands playing. Highlight of the night for me was the BB EYE set. At one point in the evening, Olivia (MISS LADY), Martin (LUMPY), John (SCIENCE MAN), and myself were all standing around discussing the idiotic solo recording projects that we do. We all giggled and excitedly traded tapes. I popped the MISS LADY tape into the tape deck on the drive home that night and I was left rather speechless by the confusing plink-plunking minimalist synth driven lunacy that oozed out my van speakers. I admittedly thought that this would be the only time I would ever listen to these songs, but in the following days and weeks I found myself referencing it to like-minded friends and insisting that they give it a listen as well. At this point I have listened to this tape more times than I care to admit and truly hope that by this time next year I have a story about getting to witness MISS LADY performing live.



CLEVELAND, OH

The incredibly lovely little shithole of Cleveland, OH is a mere three hours from where I call home, and every year that goes by I seem to find myself spending more and more time there.

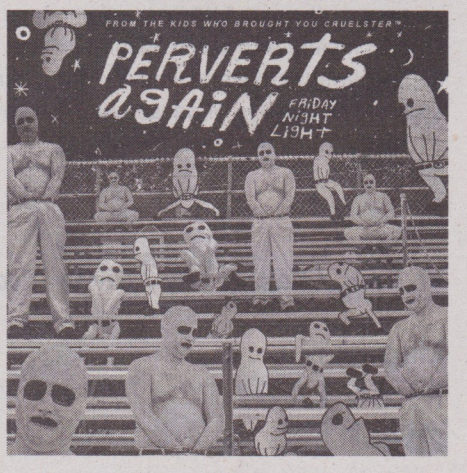
Riot Boys
CRUELSTER

LP *Lumpy*

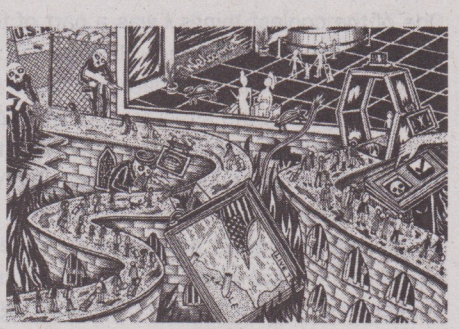
Having been a fan of this group of absolute dum-dums for a number of years, I had to make my way to Cleveland to see their final show for the foreseeable future, which just so happened to also be the second last LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS gig. To say that this was one of the best shows I saw this year would be a gross understatement. Riot Boys has got to be the best output that CRUELSTER has done to date. A few songs were immediately recognizable to me as they were re-recordings from their demo cassette on More Power Tapes released in 2015. This LP is a bit of an experience. It begins super driving and really pumps you up, but by the end you're likely to be sitting on your floor, scratching your head, drooling into your lap, and wondering what exactly you are doing with your life.

Friday Night Light
PERVERTS AGAIN

LP *Total Punk*



Alright, now take all the idiotic members of CRUELSTER, mix 'em around onto different instruments, and remove all the cymbals from the drum kit and you have PERVERTS AGAIN. If somehow you've not spent any time with this band, I recommend you change that as soon as possible. This is the second LP these lads have released, following up their absolutely perfect debut LP Our Big Party (on Non-Commercial Records), which came out a few years ago. While I don't think that this LP is quite as good as the debut, it is still awesome and one of the year's best. The rendition of a BILLY JOEL song alone would be enough to secure this record a slot in my top ten list for the year. Having never played my hometown, I have had to resort to traveling multiple hours each of the times I have seen PERVERTS AGAIN play, and never have I regretted my decision to do so. Thankfully the official novelization of the LP came out in late 2017, not 2018, as it would not make my top ten, though I am quite entertained by its existence.



I Like Your Band
VANILLA POPPERS

EP *Drunken Sailor / Feel It*

This band is just unstoppable. Last year's LP blew me away, and this EP sets the bar even higher. A powerhouse of a band that I have been lucky enough to spend months at a time carting around on tour, never getting bored of watching them every single night. This has been a big year for VANILLA POPPERS with this new stomping four-song 7" EP, a European tour, and relocation to Australia by half the members. I selfishly very much miss them being based in Cleveland and / or Toronto. Not only would I get to see them play semi-regularly, but when they were living spread across both the aforementioned cities, Buffalo is in the middle on the bus route. I have spent more than a few hours hanging out late at night at the bus station while one of them would have a layover going to and from the other members. That being said, I am way stoked for them and happy that they're still recording music this good and putting out records. I'll be waiting somewhat impatiently for whatever VANILLA POPPERS follow this up with, as every release to date has been better than its predecessor.

Well, that about wraps it up. Punk still rules. Start a band with your friends, record some crummy tunes, put out records, go on tour, what the hell else are you doing with your life?

▪ BREAK FREE FEST

We are Scout, Lyla, and Layla. We organize Break Free Fest, which is a DIY music fest for POC punx by POC punx that takes place at the end of May on Lenape land (so called Philadelphia, PA). We're getting ready for our third year, so check us out!

These are the releases of that have narrated our last year. They're raw, chaotic and written with conviction. These releases have both fueled and soothed our anger and heartache at the need to live one day at a time. We need to hear the voices of our people to feel at home. We need to hear about love, rage, solidarity, and what building a better future together looks like. This year has felt wild, angry, and dream-like, and these records reflect those feelings.

In no particular order:

Evil Hardcore
ETERAZ
CS *self released*

Absolute Chaos
DRUJ
CS *self released*

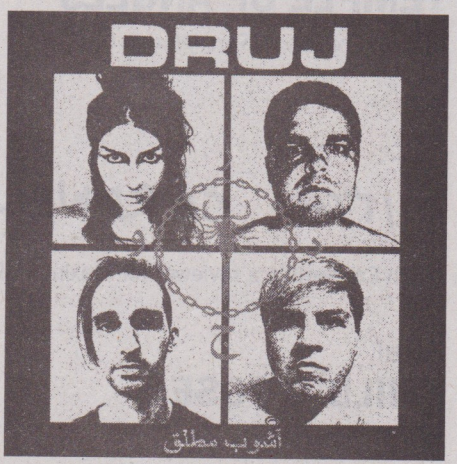
Of Alternate Spaces
COHERENCE
LP *A-F / Get Better*

Violent Crusades
FLOWER
CS *self released*

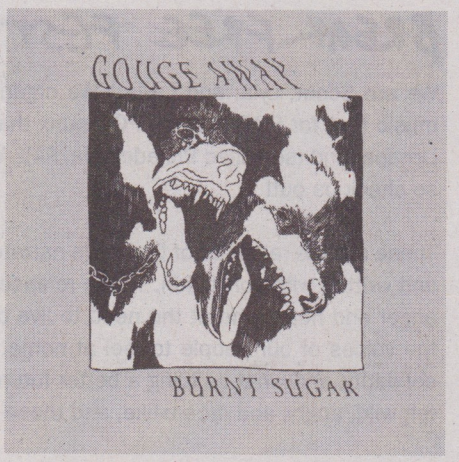
Terror Prone Nation
MATERIAL SUPPORT
CS *Aklasan Records*

Friends. Lovers. Favorites
HIRS COLLECTIVE
LP *Get Better / SRA*

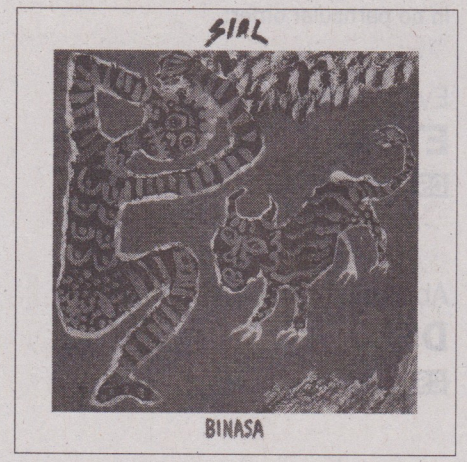
All At Once
SCREAMING FEMALES
LP *Don Giovanni*



Burnt Sugar
GOUGE AWAY
LP *Deathwish Inc*



Binasa
SIAL
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*



Foiled
TEMPLE OF ANGELS
CS *self-released / Sarcophagus Club*

- MITCH CARDWELL

Mitch Cardwell is a reviewer for Maximum Rocknroll.

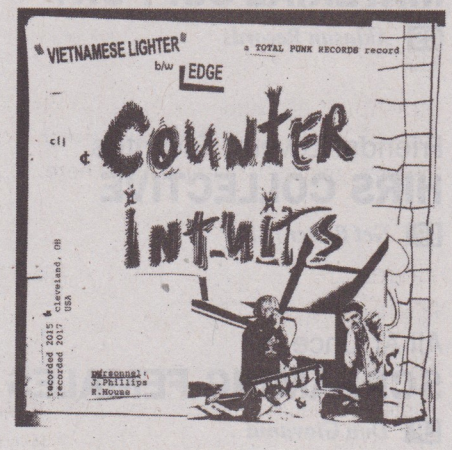
Feral
CHILD'S POSE
EP *Nervous Energy*

Punk with pop bite, not the other way around. Stayed with me the whole year, imparting more joy than most discs twice its size. More please and quickly!

Living In Excellence
CONSTANT MONGREL
LP *Anti-Fade / La Vida Es Un Mus*

So many Australian hits this year, but this takes the cake. Incisive punk forged from our modern world of shit—hard to beat, harder to ignore.

Vietnamese Lighter / Edge
COUNTER INTUITS
45 *Total Punk*



It's almost as if they're trying blow my very specific mind. Take me, COUNTER INTUITS, I'm yours. Ruin my life at your leisure. A perfect punk 45. Please come play in CA!

Die Group
DIE GROUP
LP *Sex Tape*

Wherein the leather chafe of WILD THING meets the toxicity of the SPITS. My better half immediately proclaimed this a modern masterpiece—punk as a lost art. A major hit in my household.

Caldonia / Cotton Fields
JEFFREY EVANS & ROSS JOHNSON
45 *Spacecase*

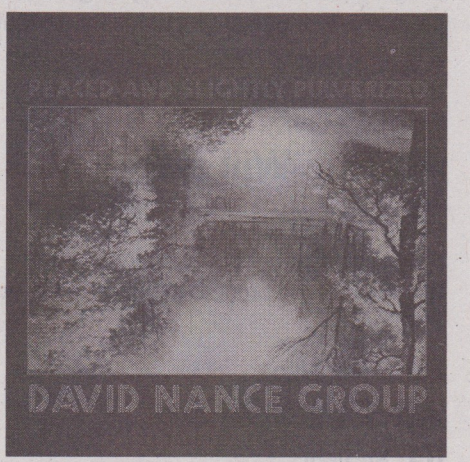
Precious few can deliver this kind of authentically loose spirit, especially in the 21st century, but luckily these heroes hold the patent. Endless kudos to Spacecase for championing this kinda stuff.

Mow the Glass
THE LAVENDER FLU
LP *In The Red*

Untethered rock'n'roll that feels risky and classic all at once. Kicked my ass live to boot. My favorite record of this year, no contest.

Peaced and Slightly Pulverized
DAVID NANCE GROUP
LP *Trouble In Mind*

Nance has that same no-fakin'-it delivery that you recognize in lifer cats twice his age, signaling that his best may still be yet to come. Fried guitars strangled by cornfed young'uns with wonderful hair.



You Can Get There From Here
RAYS
LP *Trouble In Mind*

Adjusted for this second helping, but still world-class—late-nite pop with a real edge. Embarrassing as my constant fawning may be, I just can't overstate my love for RAYS...They play what I hear in my head.

S.O.P
P.O.S.
EP *Goodbye Boozy*

Total KBD Destruction via Le Euro Mode—a banger AND a tickler. The studied vibe, steeped in punky minutia, is so thick that you'll need lube to take this on. Insert eggplant and heart emojis here.

November 1974 Demos / Spring 1977 Demos
THE REAL KIDS
LP *Crypt*

Faster, louder, meaner, take-no-prisoners, jean-creamer, god-like Punk Rock! This changed everything I thought I knew about the REAL KIDS!

▪ MIICHAEL DETOFFOLI

Michael De Toffoli reviews demos and writes the "Band Drama" column for MRR.

Depression
MONSTER SQUAD
LP *Pirates Press*

They raised the bar the first time I heard them in 2005, and this year they did it again. Thank you indefinitely, MS.

Born To Deny
DYING FOR IT
10" *Safe Inside*

Been seeing them play a lot this year, and fuck, they're so dead-on and sharp. It's totally effortless to get sucked in.

What People Call Low Self-Esteem Is Really Just Seeing Yourself The Way That Other People See You
AWAKEBUTSTILLINBED
LP *Tiny Engines*

Honestly, I love this band name because they capture the perfect representation of how it feels to not be ready to get out of bed and face the day. Also hands down one of the best and most solid debuts I've ever experienced.

Born To Deny
All This Will Be
LP *Conditions / Lauren / Middle-Man*

Super unhinged, super emotional, math-y coherent skramz. Totally reminded me of CTTS and brought me back to the good points of high school.

Hex Hex Hex
All This Will Be
LP *No Sleep*

Indie punk, post-hardcore, Discord-era emo, post-rock, post-punk, skramz, deep, heavy, atmospheric, creative, reflective, introspective, exposed, unfathomable, and more words that can't fully describe all that they've found and accomplished on this record.

Twenty-Something Mutant Nobodies
BROWN BAGS
LP *SWU*

Not gonna lie, this record hella makes this list because it's such a perfect representation of my hometown. So personal and truthful and well thought out, fucking goddamn they nailed it on this one.

Suffrage
FUCKED AND BOUND
LP *Atomic Action / Void Assault*

This band works hard. They hit the road, hit the studio, hit your eyes and your ears, and it shows. This album was simply easy to listen to all this year.

Cocaine Cunt
PMS
EP *Danger*

Seriously humbling tape. They really lead by example about the importance in taking a stand in something with everything that we put out. Give them the mic and they'll make the most of your attention and intentions.

Summer of George
GEORGE CRUSTANZA
CS *self released*

This was one of the two summer bangers this year for me. They're the perfect example of the best kind of California hardcore. Good skate tape for sure.

Blood Spill
PERIOD BOMB / BLEEDERS
CS *Crass Lips*

Both these bands are so raw and pure and creative and fierce, this is one of those genuine cassettes that I'm legitimately proud to have and share. This is what punk should be.

JOAN DETORO

Joan DeToro is a reviewer and former content coordinator at Maximum Rocknroll.

The following is a non-ranked collection of titles that I found myself repeatedly returning to as a source of strength: Shout out to The Pervert by Michelle Perez and Remy Boydell for being the equivalent in graphic novel form.

Punk Life Is Shit
PHYSIQUE
12" *Iron Lung*

Sleep
UBIK
EP *Symphony Of Destruction*

TOP 10

What Do You Stand For?
S.H.I.T.
LP *Iron Lung / La Vida Es Un Mus*

Demons
THE DARK
EP *Darker*

Brown Napalm
SALIVA TRIBE
CS *Aklasan*

Black Magic Punk
LUCTA
DG *Occult Punk Gang*

Rigor Mortis
SCYTHE
EP *Huayno Amargo / Sin Temores*

Mercado Negro
CREMALLERAS
12" *Thrilling Living*

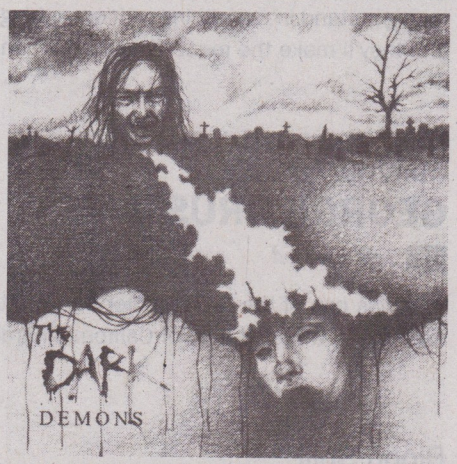
Spiraling
SPECIAL INTEREST
LP *Raw Sugar*

Noche De Maldad
PORVENIR OSCURO
EP *Always Restrictions*

Saboor
KHIIS
EP *Distort Reality*

Dauþiflin
DAUÐYFLIN
EP *Iron Lung*

Krimewatch
KRIMEWATCH
LP *Lockin' Out*



ERIKA ELIZABETH

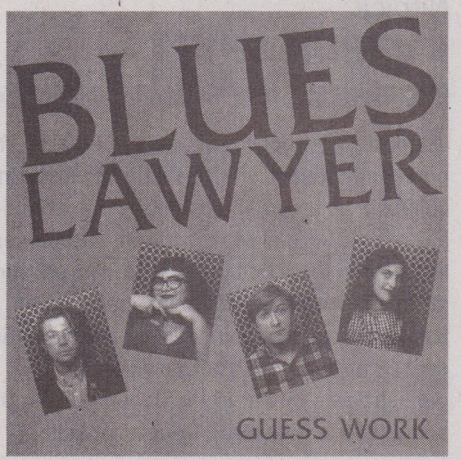
Erika Elizabeth lives in Portland, Oregon, is a columnist for Maximum Rocknroll, and plays bass in the band COLLATE.

Ten things from 2018, in alphabetical order:

Blowdryer
BLOWDRYER

CS *self released*

Like early WIRE as translated by modern punk women in a basement with a four-track machine, with lyrical phrases shouted out and repeated like anti-slogans pulled from Jenny Holzer's Truisms series over needling slashes of guitar and bashed drums for some of the best lo-fi URINALS-besotted racket since the arrival of those first two NOTS singles.



Guess Work
BLUES LAWYER

LP *Emotional Response*

Debut record from this quartet of Bay Area DIY luminaries, borrowing from the jittery and tense jangle of the FEELIES, the subtly melancholic hooks of Flying Nun's Dunedin faction, and perhaps most of all, the scrappy and lovelorn guy / gal harmonies of the VASELINES, all while grappling with the realities of daily life and romance in a modern world where hyper-connectivity only seems to result in greater alienation from one another.

Feral
CHILD'S POSE

EP *Nervous Energy*

Angular slash-and-burn pop, like ELASTICA if they'd traded all of their WIRE and STRANGLERS references with nods to the likes of the AU PAIRS and DELTA 5. Each of the four songs on this 7" flies out in a lean, two-minute burst, with sharp and sneering melodies, whiplash-bashed drums, needling guitar, and vocals zig-zagging wildly from coolly detached recitations to ecstatic shouts.

Mating Surfaces
LITHICS

LP *Kill Rock Stars*

Razor-edged post-punk minimalism highlighting the tension existing within negative space; mechanical precision in service to rhythm. It's really both a blessing and a curse to live in the same city they call home

Primo Amici
PRIMO!
LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

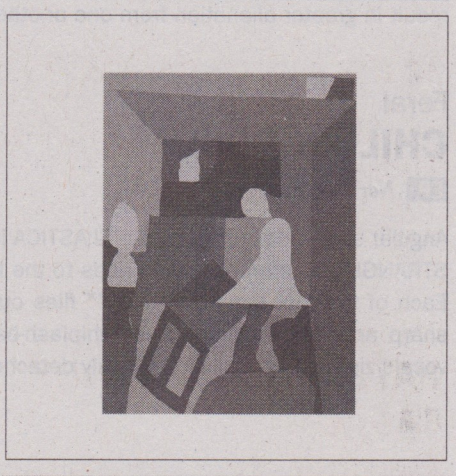
On their debut LP, PRIMO! pick up some of the loose threads that first originated in Rough Trade's late '70s / early '80s heyday and were more recently left behind by similarly-minded 21st century outfits like GRASS WIDOW or HOUSEHOLD. No nonsense, vaguely Flying Nun-accented jangle and intertwining harmonies recalling the psychedelic otherworldliness of LOOK BLUE GO PURPLE, with just the slightest trace of stark, chilly post-punk minimalism in the style of YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS, all punctuated with sparse, clockwork-precise drum beats that keep the songs from floating completely into the ether.

Nitpick
PURPUR SPYTT
EP *Kakakids / 1000 Balles / Pouet Schallplaten / Les Syndicats des Scorpions*

Charlotte Mermoud subtracts elements from the songs of her one-woman post-punk project until just the most minimal structure is left, threatening to collapse at any moment like a precarious structure of Jenga blocks. Vocals are recited with a flat emotional detachment bordering on spoken word, bass lines throb in repetitive and circular patterns, and a tinny and slightly off-beat drum machine rattles in the background, sometimes accompanied by brief flashes of sparse, single-note guitar cutting through the negative space. A downbeat bedroom interpretation of LIZZY MERCIER DESCLOUX's fiery disco-punk grooves by way of the darkened shadows of early '80s Euro coldwave; the sound of the new Neue Deutsche Welle.

You Can Get There From Here
RAYS
EP *Trouble in Mind*

Last year's debut LP from RAYS was a bewitching, slightly shambolic juxtaposition of VELVET UNDERGROUND-descended psychedelic sprawl and the sort of freewheeling jangle forever associated with early '80s Flying Nun records, and this year's follow-up only further refines that formula into total pop perfection—a giddy rush of chiming guitar, buzzing organ, unassuming vocals, and sneaky Paisley (Sub)underground rave-ups.

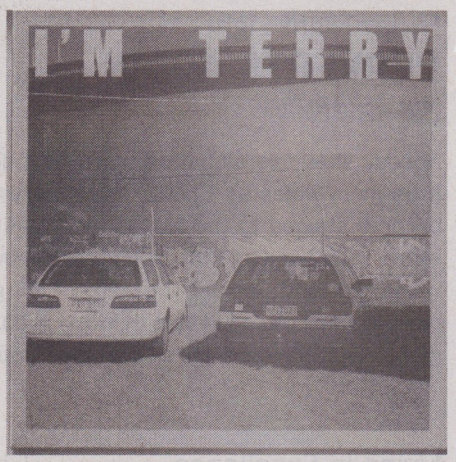


Collected Acknowledgements
TABLE SUGAR
LP *Stucco*

Playful and skeletal racket crafted out of joyously overlapping vocal incantations, percolating keyboard, rubbery twist-and-turn bass, hopscotch drum patterns, and scritch-scratch guitar lines—it's a sound that's simultaneously jumbled and precise, following zig-zagging, unpredictable paths that somehow always end up exactly where they're supposed to lead. TABLE SUGAR clearly learned some basic lessons from the minimalist, hodge-podge post-punk scrawl of the RAINCOATS and the women of the late '70s / early '80s Rough Trade axis, who fully embraced the concept that anything and everything is possible within the span of a song, but they're very much operating on their own enchanting and wholly contemporary wavelength here.

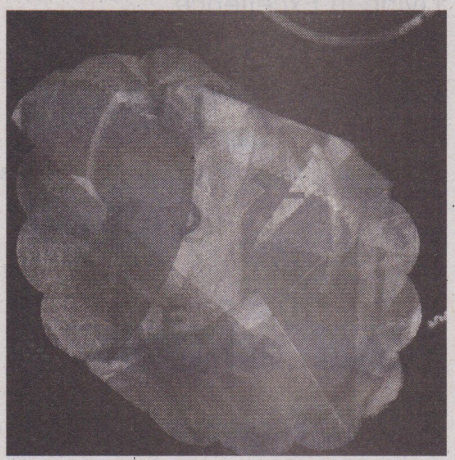
I'm Terry
TERRY
LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

There's no shortage of great Australian bands currently knocking out off-kilter jangle with a nervous post-punk edge, but TERRY might be the standard bearers at this point—this is their third LP in three years, they're not fucking around! I feel like they might have also finally outgrown the "supergroup" designation that always followed them due to their personnel overlap with seemingly every modern Aussie DIY outfit of note, coming into their own identity as deadpan scrap-pop geniuses.



Left Hand
VITAL IDLES
LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

For the past few years, Glasgow's VITAL IDLES have been crafting some of the most brilliant and shambolically off-kilter sounds at the intersection of DIY pop and post-punk, with a ripped-up bricolage aesthetic borrowing elements from the noisier fringes of the C86 movement (think SHOP ASSISTANTS or early PASTELS) and local concern Postcard Records, the giddy, art-damaged femme-punk anarchy of KLEENEX or the PETTICOATS, and the type of rough-and-tumble crash-pop sounds scattered across countless singles from the catalogs of Slumberland and K Records in the late '80s and early '90s.



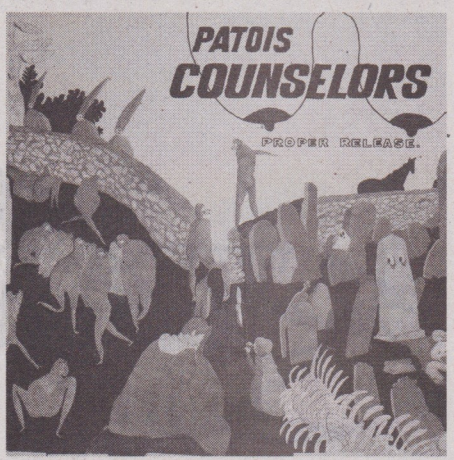
- MIRANDA FISHER

It's me, the Content Coordinator of this magazine.
2018 is finally dead. Long live punk music.

In some particular order:

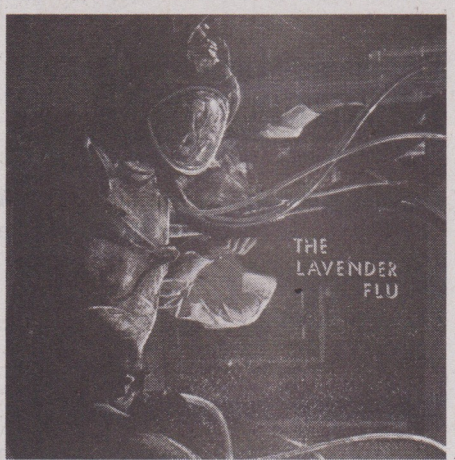
Proper Release
PATOIS COUNSELORS
LP *(ever/never)*

Tough to choose a top LP of the year, but in the end, this is it for me. "Repeat Offender" is stuck in my head every day; "Target Not a Comrade" should be in a movie so it can win an Oscar; the way the singer phrases "what are you doing with your hands" haunts me (in a good way, duh). Ever/never cements its position as the most interesting label going these days.



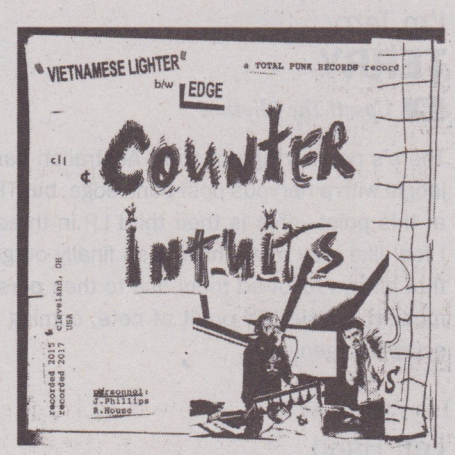
Mow the Glass
THE LAVENDER FLU
LP *In the Red*

Gorgeous, intense, indescribable album from a band that has made me cry more times than I can count for reasons I can't even explain.



Friday Night Light
PERVERTS AGAIN
LP *Total Punk*

Nobody likes this album as much as I do because nobody has listened to it as many times as I have. The more you listen, the more you love it. You become attuned to the hidden meanings and messages that are contained within each song and that run as subliminal currents through the album as a whole. Brilliant! Genius! The voice of our generation! Also a very good snotty punk album if you don't care to invest in dozens of listens, but you're really only going to get the most out of this one if you go all in.

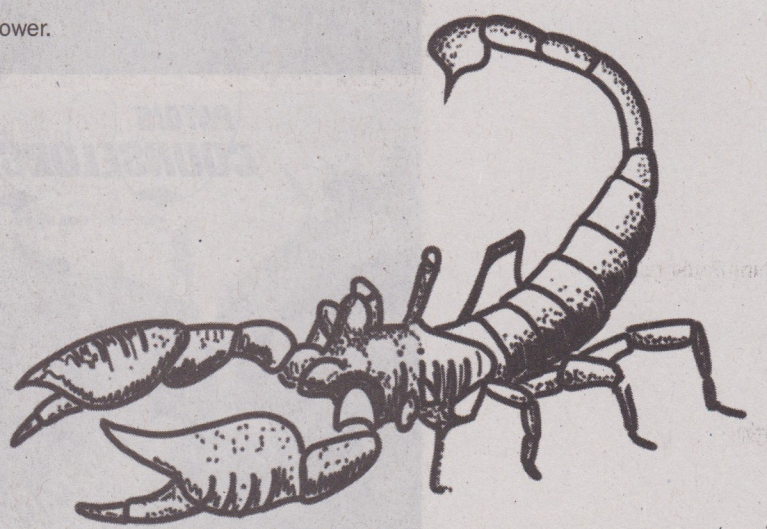


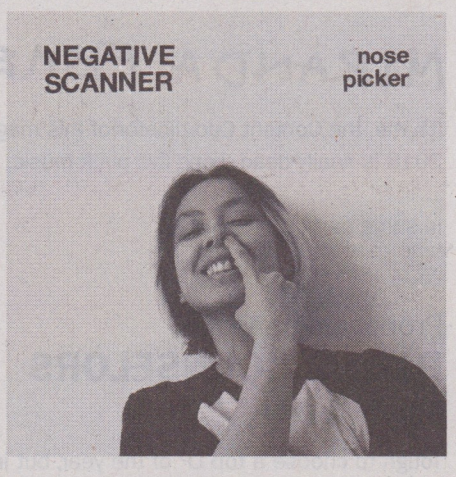
Living In Excellence
CONSTANT MONGREL
LP *Anti-Fade / La Vida Es Un Mus*

Plenty of other people expounding on this one in these pages, so I'll just add the following considered commentary: what a great fuckin' album!

Nose Picker
NEGATIVE SCANNER
LP *Trouble in Mind*

Power.





Vietnamese Lighter / Edge
COUNTER INTUITS
45 *Total Punk*

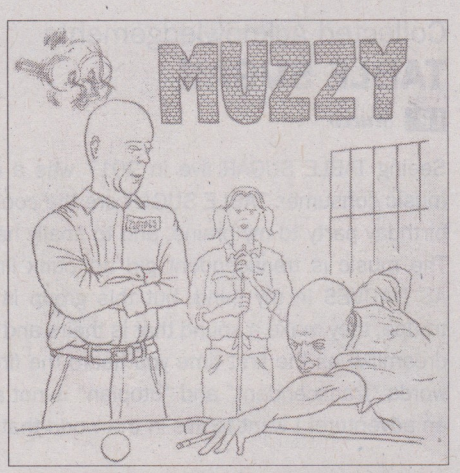
I'm not big on "Not My President" as a protest slogan, but it does invite the question: do we get to choose our own presidents? If so, mine is Ron House.

Cost of Living
PRIVATE SECTOR
EP *Byllepest*

"Survival Is Killing Me" has gotta be my #1 most listened song of 2018. Too real!

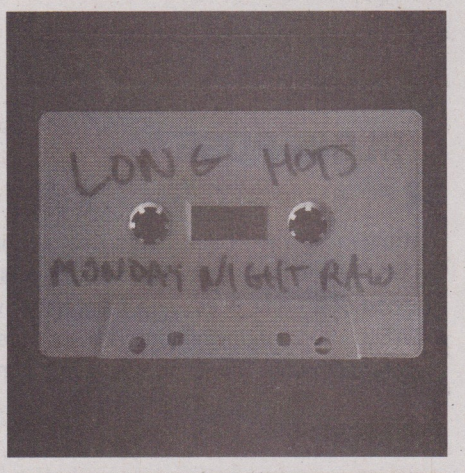
Arby Creep
MUZZY
EP *Goodbye Boozy*

Thank god for this I GET MYNZE follow-up.



Monday Night Raw
LONG HOTS
CS *self-released*

Thanks to Layla Gibbon for the long, hot tip on this one, which is exactly my shit: three incredibly talented women creating music that's simultaneously simple and complex, precise and shambolic. Searing, exploratory guitar lines anchored by a rock solid rhythm section. A perfect band?!?



Give Chance a Peace
CHRONOPHAGE
CS *self-released*

One of the worst things about moving out of Austin is that I no longer get to see CHRONOPHAGE all the time. Luckily, they put out this tour tape over the summer, plus their LP should be out by the time you read this.

▪ LAYLA GIBBON

Layla Gibbon is a reviewer and former coordinator of Maximum Rocknroll.

In no particular order:

If Not Tomorrow / I Was More of a Mess Then
COMET GAIN
45 *Tapete*

Perfect mod punk basement pop dream—for fans of DAN TREACY and Shena MacKay. The B-side is my song of the year, Rachel's snotty yet dreamy deadpan vocals carrying the world weary nostalgia of our collapsing youth / Too old to die young etc etc

Primo Amici
PRIMO!
LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

Album of the year for me! Like SANDRA BELL playing WIRE songs, in short my dream band, Primo Amici has the dreamlike disquiet of YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS instilled in its essence. My words are puny and futile, just buy the record punker.

Collected Acknowledgements

TABLE SUGAR

LP *Stucco*

Seeing TABLE SUGAR live in 2017 was a career highlight for this brain dead music consumer. TABLE SUGAR are the coolest, the tapes were like an endless birthday party to my brains, and to finally have a 12" in my grips feels utopian. The music is transcendent girl art punk linking up the FOAMS to DRESS UP AS NATIVES in my mind, but this group is not some referential reenactment troupe, they make a sound that is theirs and only theirs. It is as adventurous and dreamlike as the first time you heard the first LILLIPUT LP, in fact my use of the words "transcendent" and "utopian" is not a stretch! This is truly a dream, truly an adventure! I want to live in the world that this record has made.

Feral

CHILD'S POSE

EP *Nervous Energy*

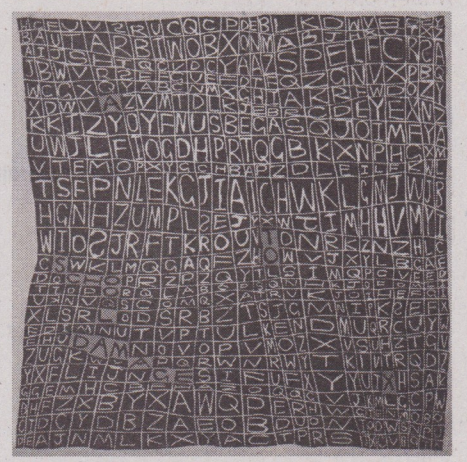
Lost my mind when I first heard this, and instantly ordered the 7" direct from the UK. A band that makes me think "this is what ELASTICA should have done!" Stripped down and direct with the coolest vocal style, art punk scritch guitars a SWELL MAPS-ian rhythm but yeah let's just go back to those vocals!!! Perfect pop! Perfect punk! This EP is why I am a punk in 2018.

A to X

SCHOOL DAMAGE

LP *Chapter Music*

Their last LP made my last list and there is nothing different about this year, surrounded by the same brutal turmoil, same evidence that Australian art punks are forming some of the coolest concepts in sound... Sounds like some Midwestern art punk band from 1982 in the best possible manner, can't decide if I like this one more than the last one?! Maybe so? What a group! What a sound! Fans of C86, those Messthetics comps and bands that formed in the wake of the B52s and DEVO in towns across America circa 1981 should immediately investigate. True Layla-core.

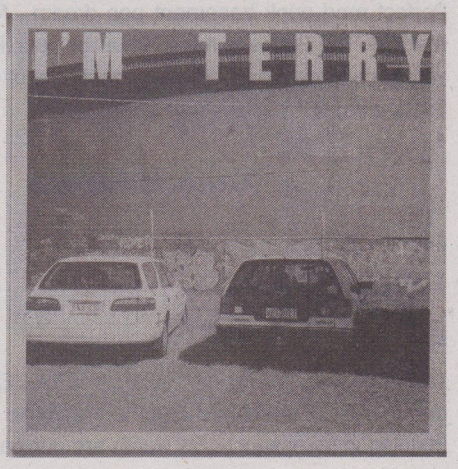


I'm Terry

TERRY

LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

I have been obsessed with all of the TERRY 45s, but a little less so with their LPs until this one... These songs have an unnerving / unsettling pop feel that makes me think of Chairs Missing. Really. It feels throwaway and casual like the best music, but also insidious and well thought out, earworms with teeth. The lyrics can seem almost like a word game as well as a secret code message to a radical liberation cell. I can't stop listening to this, and I would advise you to do the same thing with your time and life! Unbelievably good record!



Mating Surfaces
LITHICS
LP *Kill Rock Stars*

In which I quote myself from the press release: "A stern danceable sound that summons cut up snapshots of Su Tissue and Mark E Smith, an imagined landscape where CAPTAIN BEEFHEART hits that 99 Records 'Too Many Creeps' beat."

Living In Excellence
CONSTANT MONGREL
LP *Anti-Fade / La Vida Es Un Mus*

Was so excited to listen to this, I think every other record by this band has made my MRR year end top ten and here we are again...What a group! Lyrics tear down the cynical bleat of our current political age of extreme delirium and hatred while the sound behind somehow reminds me that swaggering VENOM P STINGER style but maybe also KIRK BRANDON AND THE PACK, just relentless fucking power! The songs are so catchy and sick, desolate and total.

Proper Release
PATOIS COUNSELORS
LP *(ever/never)*

Some sort of sick collision between COUNTRY TEASERS and VERTICAL SLIT. What more could a girl want?

Hippo Lite
DRINKS
LP *Drag City*

CATE LE BON and TIM PRESLEY making strange glassy Messthetics adventure sound. Playful and cool, a strange pleasure.

Hippo Lite
DRINKS
LP *Drag City*

CATE LE BON and TIM PRESLEY making strange glassy Messthetics adventure sound. Playful and cool, a strange pleasure.

Records that came out in december of 2017 that exist in the weird limbo between year end top tens

BB EYE – "Headcheese Heartthrob" LP (Fish)
TOTAL CONTROL – "Laughing at the System" 12" (Alter)

Endless contenders

RAYS LP, LUDELLA BLACK LP, COLD MEAT EP, TOUGH CUSTOMER EP, SHIFTERS LP, LIME CRUSH LP, LAVENDER HEX LP, BB AND THE BLIPS LP, LITHICS 45, LAVENDER FLU LP, ALISON STATTON AND SPIKE LP, PHEW / ANA DA SILVA 2xLP, CREMELLERAS 12", GIRL RAY 45, STIFF LOVE EP, NANDAS EP

Reissues

VECTOR COMMAND – "System 3" LP (HoZac)
HAND GRENADES "Demo to London" 12" (Last Laugh) (Last minute entry for reissue of the year!)
JIM SHEPARD – "The Letter Tapes" CS (Feeding Tube)
INDEX – "Originals Vol 1 1967–68" LP (Lion)
FRESH MAGGOTS – CD (Fan Club)

Tapes

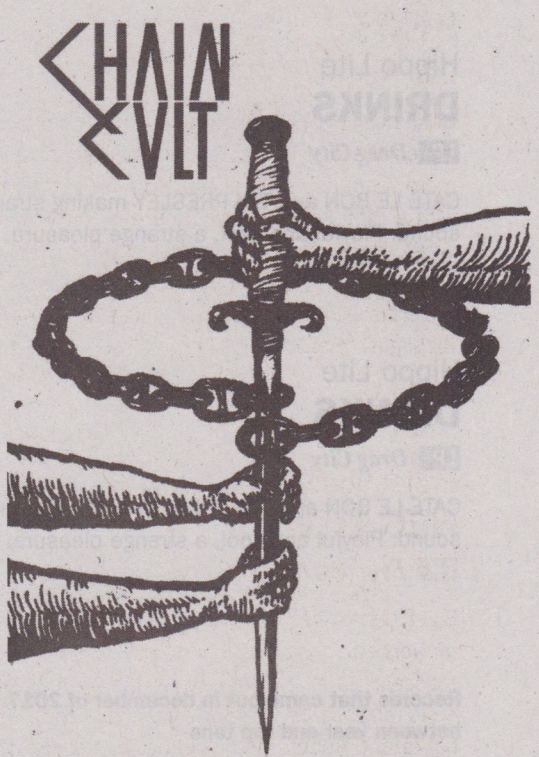
(tiny list! I guess i mostly bandcamped demos??)

NAKED ROOMATE—members of the WORLD making perfect bedroom pop-wave
LONG HOTS—Philly supergroup, lovely scuzz, someone put out a record already
WARP—favorite SF group! NWI meets Dangerhouse? So sick.

METTE HELMS

Mette Helms is a columnist for Maximum Rocknroll.

In the glory days of digital streaming, the value of music is shrinking rapidly. Music is brought with us everywhere in our headphones as background noise to every setting and is—in a sense—becoming less meaningful.
The sheer amount of music listening has made it a luxury to let yourself be absorbed by focused record listening. To let your eyes gaze at the physical covers you're holding in your hands and inhale that familiar chemical factory-made smell of vinyl. I treasure those moments.
Here's the top ten releases that caught my full attention this year. In alphabetical order, of course.



Demo 2018

CHAIN CULT

LP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

The first release by the Greek post-punk three piece is a powerful catchy creation that got me hooked on the first listen. CHAIN CULT is a relatively new band formed late last year. I'm genuinely impressed by just how good everything about their demo is, especially on the ballad "Black Hole" and political anthem "Chain Cult." CHAIN CULT is post-punk to the bone and wakes a roaring power in their sound. It feels oh so good to feel bad with their cold vocals, steady smacking drums, and airy guitar tracks.

HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS

LP *Toxic State*

HANK WOOD is one of those few bands who have developed their own specific sound and have been able to create multiple killer albums staying within that frame (losing a percussionist didn't change their core concept). The New York outfit's third album is pure punk'n'roll and it is a more dynamic musical drama than their previous releases. A mutant of hardcore punk and keyboard-driven garage rock, and exactly this fusion allows for the band to make avant-garde choices. The lyrics are repetitive but performed in various ways, and the singer's signature expressions add up to 60 "uh"s and 66 "baby"s spread on the album's ten tracks.
Highlight: "It's Lonely in This World All Alone"

New Wave of Fear

HORROR VACUI

LP *Sabotage*

On this record, HORROR VACUI created an even darker sound than before in the borderlands of goth punk and death rock. A solid album format with a signature sound that accompanies the songs through the thrillers and fillers. This is a carefully composed album by the Italian five-piece, and not just a collection of songs. Music-wise, the tracks are laid out with melodic hooks but also an underlying setting of unease and nyctophobia, like a creature is lurking and creeping up on you from behind.
Highlight: "Grey Shadows"

Saboor

KHIIS

EP *Distort Reality*

Oakland's KHIIS is definitely a hardcore band. Nevertheless, they manage to match the dull hardcore trademarks with their own style, hence making them more than just another hardcore band. The hardcore arrangement is thickened with a metallic sound without ever making the mistake of crossing the line to crust. The vocals are expressive and shouted in Farsi, the language primarily spoken in Iran, confirming that music can be expressed to speak for itself and understanding the vocals is insignificant to appreciating the music.
Highlight: "Sahar" / "Zabon"

Projections

NEGATIV

LP *Byllepest / Ruin Nation / Sabotage*

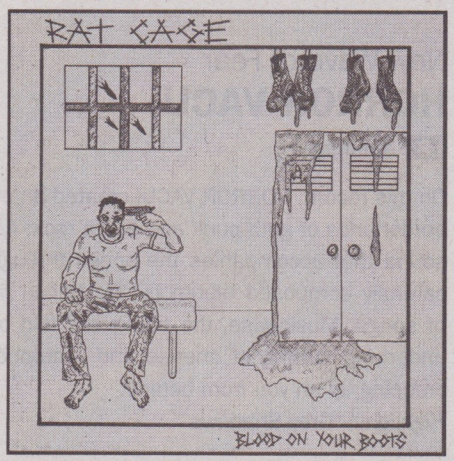
Eight tracks of primitively aggressive yet anxiously tense punk from the pits of Norwegian hardcore. Rock'n'roll style hook-based guitar leads accompany staccato drum rhythms, while the beat is kept mid-tempo enough to keep an eerie atmosphere throughout the record. The vocals are razor-sharp in their barks and shouts, and adds a final touch of mania and desperation. NEGATIV fuses disciplined hardcore arrangements with chaos and turbulence.
Highlight: "I Am Dagger"

Støv
OND TRO
LP *Travesty Music*

This album was just released and is still hot off the press. OND TRO is a local Copenhagen band to look out for in 2019. They perform hardcore punk that reminds me of a combination of the early Danish hardcore bands, with a melancholic twist. Their song structure approach is unconventional and to the point as few songs have repeated parts. OND TRO includes lyrical hooks that are sing along-able, such as the hook in "Syg Kærlighed"—a tongue-twister to those not familiar with the Danish language for sure—translating to "sick love," as in a love romance gone bad.
Highlight: "Døde Sjæle"

Blood on Your Boots
RAT CAGE
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

Old school Swedish-style käng mangel with a UK82 vibe instantly induced by the British accent vocals. RAT CAGE is a one man raging machine relentlessly giving life to high energy anthems with a political content. Though the concept doesn't sway from the mid-'80s Scandi hardcore influences, RAT CAGE brings a fresh energy to the genre and proves that this isn't just another band paying tribute to a sound of the past.
Highlight: "Blood on Your Boots"

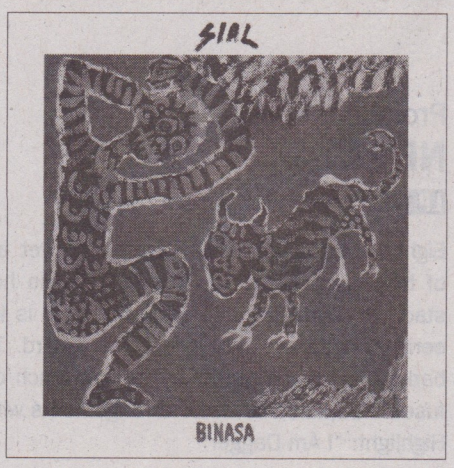


Worship
SECT MARK
LP *Iron Lung*

Eight songs of shattered dirty hardcore drenched in noise being broadcast from Rome. The songs merge together on the record with a chainsaw sounding guitar that leads each fast track into the next one. The drummer plays an ever-changing rhythm with plenty use of the toms without slowing down the frantically racing pace. SECT MARK has mastered the art of making distinct songs. Instead of the usual noisy hardcore punk collection of eight times 90 seconds of noise and snare drum, they surely stand out from the crowd with this banger.
Highlight: "Scouts"

Binasa
SIAL
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

This outfit plays at full volume with the meters constantly peaking in the red on these six tracks that stretch over just about ten minutes. SIAL shares members with another Singaporean favorite, LUBRICANT, which is clearly heard in their sound. It's raw hardcore punk with buzzsaw guitar and bass and a furious pounding drum beat that orchestrates the sound of rebellion and resistance. There's much soul behind the vocals, which are screamed out like they are being spat at the faces of their aggressors.
Highlight: "Mantera"



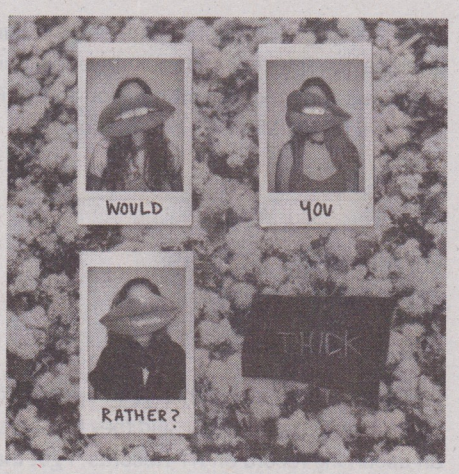
Sueños Deceptivos
TOZCOS
LP *Verdugo Discos*

A mixture of straight forward hardcore and melodic bouncy Spanish-spoken punk out of Southern California. TOZCOS prove that they can produce perfectly performed hardcore punk without having to flash pretentiously long solos, breakdowns, or other extravagant add ons. Musically, they express themselves tremendously with few classic mechanisms, without compromising their fast paced beat or intensity. This is a "press play and GO" record taking you the straight honest way.
Highlight: "Ritmo de la Muerte"

RYAN HERTEL

Ryan Hertel has been a shitworker and record / zine / book reviewer for MRR for over two and a half years. He's now living in Portland in search of new wonders and passions. Tell neat people to hang out with him.

2017 was a tough year. I feel like we were all reacting to the terror of our reality and no one got much done. I definitely remember struggling to come up with my top ten, because both the music world and I seemed to be paralytic. Not this year, though. We've broken out of that, and there is some genuine rage out there now. 2018 was a bad year too, but damned if it wasn't a great year for music. Every band on my list has at least one woman in the group, which a decade ago would have had to be intentional and now is just due to the progress of the scene. I'm trying to be hopeful, and this year in music really helped.



Would You Rather
THICK
EP *self-released*

Here is a trio of garage-rocky Brooklynite lady drunk punks who have made it their mission to kick machismo punk boys firmly in the crotch. This four-song EP is all fighting words. Now I'm looking forward to seeing the fight.

Dear Beer
THE BOMBPOPS
EP *Fat Wreck*

Also in the realm of lady drunk punks, these four tracks of dual-lady vocals have taken the sound of the BOMBPOPS' back catalog and distilled it down to concentrated craft beer and sweat. I always say I'm a sucker for male / female dueling vocals, but I love the upsettingly more rare double female vocals even more (I want the DANCE HALL CRASHERS back). I got to see this quartet at Riot Fest this year on the same stage where I had seen KITTEN FOREVER, WAR ON WOMEN, and BAD COP/BAD COP in previous years, so they are in good company with some of the best recent bands out there.

Friends. Lovers. Favorites.

HIRS COLLECTIVE

LP *Get Better / SRA*

This album feels like the culmination of everything HIRS has been doing since their beginning. This album is a masterwork of queer punk / hardcore / grind, what have you. It's the kind of album that opens up a path for the artist to go forward and do whatever they want now, because they've already accomplished something excellent. Every release after this is just a wonderful extra gift to themselves and the listeners.

Pray For Rain

TURQUOIZ NOIZ

LP *Related*

I reviewed this album a couple months ago and found it to be one of the weirdest / most unique albums I've reviewed. Then, I got to see this band live, and it was exactly as strange as I expected it would be. This group is keeping the Bay Area interesting, and more bands need to take their lead. I demand more sonic experimentation in 2019.

Keep Them Counting

THE LAST GANG

LP *Fat Wreck*

Brenna Red growls through this entire album in a way that will both make your grandpa cower in fear and your six-year-old niece jump around in excitement. This band was a perfect recent addition to the Fat Wreck roster like BAD COP/BAD COP and the BOMBPOPS before them.

Of Alternate Spaces

COHERENCE

LP *A-F / Get Better*

I first saw Coherence this year opening for HIRS COLLECTIVE at 1234 Go! Records in Oakland. They said they had a secret and then revealed the secret as an upcoming record on A-F Records. I got that very loud record. It's great. They're great. Also, this will be like the 200th mention in my reviews about loving dueling vocals. Everybody gets this album as a prize!

Semi-Permanent

KITTEN FOREVER

LP *Rat Queen*

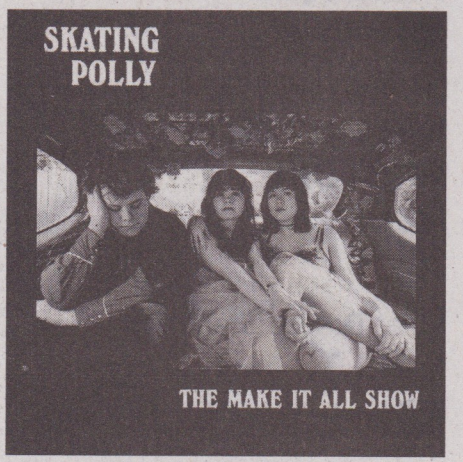
Everyone's favorite bass, drum, and telephone receiver band released a new album this year, and there is no reason you shouldn't already own it. Take their album 7 Hearts and make it angrier and louder, and you'll get this treasure. Bonus: You can get it as a lyrics zine with a download code. How often do you get to pick if your new favorite album goes on your music shelf or bookshelf?!

Capture the Flag
WAR ON WOMEN
---- *Bridge Nine*

This album is thrashier and even more hardcore than the ripper that was their first album. These are twelve manifestos from a group that is fucking pissed that you didn't listen to their warnings the first time. They even released a college-level workbook that includes many of the lyrics of the album and explores their themes. Pick that up too.

The Make It All Show
SKATING POLLY
---- *El Camino*

This loud, occasionally twee, but always aggressive sister duo (now with bonus brother!) have been getting a lot of notice over the last few years, and it's about time that they broke out. This is teach-yourself-to-play-whatever-instrument-you-can-find and just go with it rock. This is what it sounds like when the people that need to make music just fucking do it. Long Ride is a punky garage rocker that will follow me around this coming year.



Twerp Verse
SPEEDY ORTIZ
---- *Carpark*

Led by the brass-ringed fist of Sadie Dupuis, SPEEDY ORTIZ has apparently been killing it for a few years, but I didn't know that. I found them when I saw LIZ PHAIR on her most recent stop through San Francisco this year. Oh boy, did I feel like a dummy! Get in on this jingly jangly sonic maelstrom of poetry now before you look like a late to the show dum-dum like me. This album will attack you in the face and you will like it.

- PIROUZ MEHMANDOOST

Pirouz is in charge of MRR's New Blood feature, which highlights up and coming bands on our website at maximumrocknroll.com/new-blood

Damn this is hard, there are so many more! Some were featured in New Blood (ETERAZ and PROVOKE in 2018, BODY PRESSURE for their first release). In no particular order:

Crisis Actors
CRISIS ACTORS
CS *Self-released*

Spiraling
SPECIAL INTEREST
LP *Raw Sugar*

Saboor
KHIIS
EP *Distort Reality*

U.S. Decay
BODY PRESSURE
LP *self-released*

Punk Life Is Shit
PHYSIQUE
12" *Iron Lung*

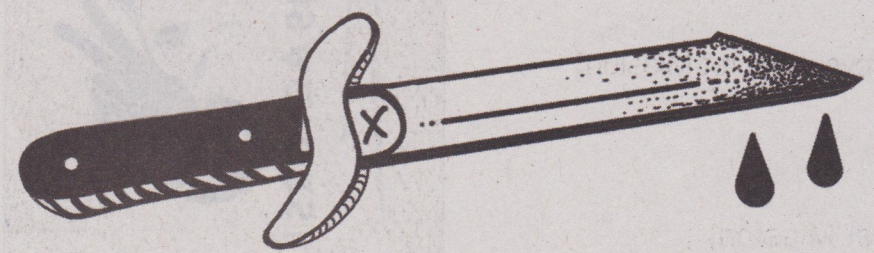
Here First / Get Out
PROVOKE
CS *self-released*

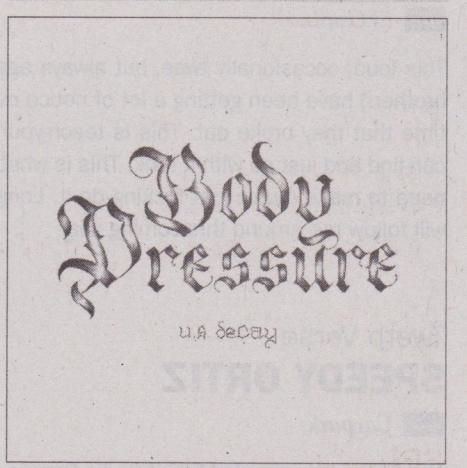
What Do You Stand For
S.H.I.T.
LP *Iron Lung / La Vida Es Un Mus*

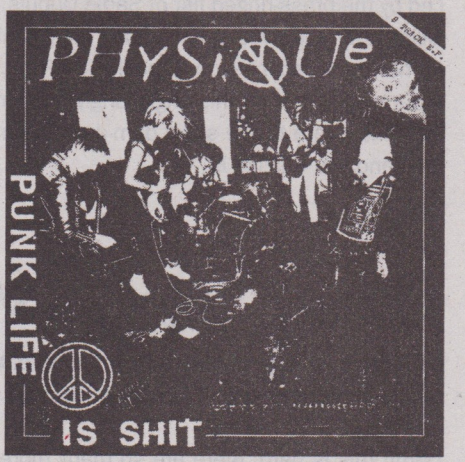
Corroded
WARTHOG
EP *Toxic State*

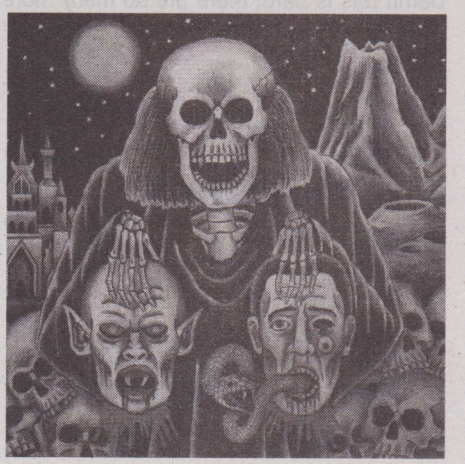
Cassette Demo
RIXE
CS *La Vida Es Un Mus*

Evil Hardcore
ETERAZ
CS *self-released*





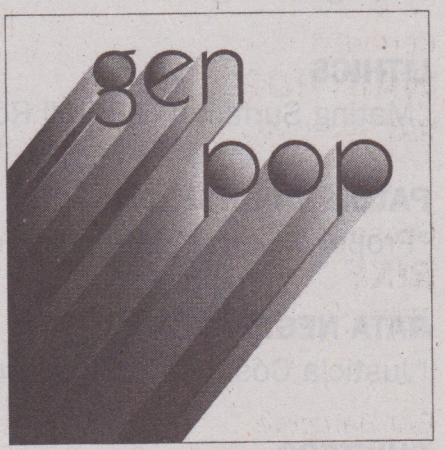




NECK CHOP

Neck Chop is a record label and distro in Fullerton, CA.

2018 was another great year for new music and reissues! Outside of it being the shittiest year for me / Neck Chop personally, it was still a great year for music. Anybody that says there's nothing good out clearly isn't trying or looking because I had a hard time keeping my lists to only ten. Again, I kept off anything from bands / side projects of people that I've worked with at Neck Chop to keep the list unbiased. I also didn't have anything on my lists from Bitter Lake Recordings, but everything they've done has been great, and I look forward to what else they're doing next year. To keep the subject of Japanese music, the FLEX! Japanese punk / hardcore book was another highlight of 2018—if you haven't picked that up, don't miss out on that. Here are my lists in alphabetical order (and I'm sure I've forgotten about stuff):



7"

COUNTER INTUITS
"Vietnamese Lighter / Edge" (Total Punk)

THE DARK
"Demons" EP (Darker)

GEN POP
"II" EP (Feel It)

MIDNITE SNAXXX
"Greedy Little Thing / Turf War" (Goodbye Boozy)

MIDNITE SNAXXX
"Let Me Do What I Want / Faded Pictures" (Bachelor)

PARSNIP
"Feeling Small / Winter" (Anti Fade)

PREDATOR
"No Face / White Plague" (Total Punk)

RULER
"Tiger / Gimme Some Noise" (Mangrove / Secret Mission)

RULER
"Jeanie Jeanie Jeanie / (It's Not)
Saturday Night" (Mangrove / Secret Mission)
SHIFTERS – "Just Sat Down" EP (Digital Regress)

SKULL CULT
"Skeleton Mind" EP (Goodbye Boozy)

SUCK LORDS
"New Lords Music" EP (Stucco)

12"

ALIEN NOSEJOB
"Various Fads and Technological Achievements" LP (Anti Fade)

BB AND THE BLIPS
"Shame Job" LP (Thrilling Living)

HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS
LP (Toxic State)

LANDLINE
LP (Digital Regress)

LITHICS
"Mating Surfaces" LP (Kill Rock Stars)

PATOIS COUNSELORS
"Proper Release" LP (ever/never)

RATA NEGRA
"Justicia Cósmica" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)

SHIFTERS
"Have A Cunning Plan" LP (Trouble in Mind)

SPECIAL INTEREST
"Spiraling" LP (Raw Sugar)

TABLE SUGAR
"Collected Acknowledgements" LP (Stucco)

Reissue/Archive Release

BAD TIMES
"Streets Of Iron" LP (Goner)

CARBONAS
"Your Moral Superiors: Singles and Rarities" 2xLP (Goner)

CHEAP NASTIES
LP (HoZac)

CHILD MOLESTORS
"1978 Hound Dog Recordings" 12" (Negative Jazz)

CHILD MOLESTORS
"(I'm the) Hillside Strangler / Don't Worry Kyoko (Mummy's Only Looking for Her Hand in the Snow)" (Meat House)

EXECUTE
Vol.1–3 LPs (Bootleg)

FIRESTARTER
LP (Secret Mission)

FIRESTARTER
"Livin' On The Heat" LP(Secret Mission)

THE MODS
"Reactions" LP (Ugly Pop)

NO TREND
"Teen Love" EP (Digital Regress)

NO TREND
"You Deserve Your Life" LP (Digital Regress)

THE REAL KIDS
"November 1974 Demos / Spring 1977 Demos" LP (Crypt)

TEENAGE DEPRESSION
"Skank Or Die" 7" (ReRun)

V/A
"Destroy All Art Vol. 2" LP (Rock 'N Roll Parasite)

V/A
"Killed By Death #15 New Zealand" LP (RedRum)

V/A
"No Puberty" LP (Rush)

V/A
"Outer Himmilayan Presents" LP (Dark Entries / Sacred Bones)

▪ NIRZAR W/ OLGA

Nirzar is a designer for Maximum Rocknroll. And here's a list of some oddities of 2018. In some particular order.

Todo Está Corrompido
PIÑÉN
EP *self-released*

Primal punk from Barcelona. Piñén are one of the fiercest bands around these days. FInally we have a record that does justice to how they sound live.

HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS
LP *Toxic State*

He says "baby" 123 times, we counted.

EP II
NANDAS
EP *Toxic State*

The other kids get more attention but Nandas are still one of the best bands coming out of New York and this 7" proves it.

LUX
LP *Discos Enfermos*

Why is this not on any other lists? Catchy, anarcho punk done the way they did it back in the day.

Manadans
KAELAN MIKLA
LP *Artofffact*

What even is this? Icelandic Banshees doing some weird poetic shit.
It's excellent.

Split w/ Perky Tits
PISSE
10" *Phantom*

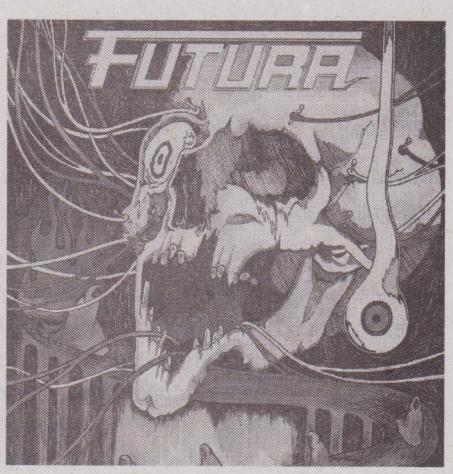
Don't look up the lyrics if you don't speak German. Synthy goodness with some bite.

Mostrame Lo Peor
FORRA
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

Chaotic, scathing, a true joy.

Célebres Plumíferos
PERRA VIDA
EP *self-released*

Peruvian punk that is not getting enough attention. Plus points for the block-print for the cover.



Spit on the Flag
FUTURA
EP *self-released*

West Coast doing it again. Catch them live if you can, absolute fun.

El Mañanero / Maldita
WAU Y LOS ARRRGHS!!!
45 *Slovenly Recordings*

All these records and Wau's still got it. I wish they had more than just two tracks on this EP.

AL QUINT

Al Quint is the publisher of Suburban Voice fanzine and blog, host of Sonic Overload Radio and has been an MRR columnist since 2005. He lives in Massachusetts...

Yup, another year passes, and this one wasn't as completely fucked up as recent years. Sure, we still have a fucking fascist asshole for a president. There are also some personal challenges ahead but nothing insurmountable. On a very happy note, my beautiful wife Ellen and I celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary this past June. The Red Sox won the World Series. And punk rock continues to be the balm that helps me cope with life's pressures. So here are ten of my favorites this year, more or less in order, subject to change, void where prohibited, mileage may vary, check with your doctor or pharmacist...

"It's the end of a fucked up year... there's another one coming...OH SHIT!"
—EMBRACE, "End Of a Year"

Leisure
MARBLED EYE
LP *Digital Regress*

This band operates in a similar realm as INSTITUTE, in that there's an air of melancholy and detachment, both lyrically and vocally. One difference, though, is the enunciation is sharper, i.e. neither vocalist sounds as though they're slurring their words. The songs are built on sublime chord progressions and changes that often add a subtle, sneaky hookiness. It's not somber music, though. Everything is sharp and energetic, melodic and muscular. It all meshes perfectly, twin guitar lines swirling around each other, supported by a hard-hitting, rhythmic versatility. Some jarring post-punk moves here and there, but, for the most part, the songs aren't herky-jerky. They have a steadier flow and will burn into your brain.

Late Nite Acts
BETA BOYS
LP *Feel It*

Their best stuff to date, following a number of 7"s. Snotty, snarly hardcore punk with textured guitar shadings a la Dance With Me era TSOL. There's an overarching darkness both musically and lyrically but not really falling into the goth category, even with doomy-sounding songs like the title track and "L'Appel Du Vide." A power-packed journey destined to give you nightmares.

Choke On It
NO LOVE
LP *Sorry State*

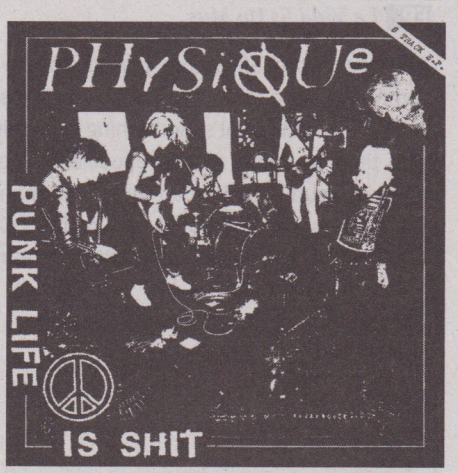
Feverish and frenetic punk by this NC band. There's melody, but there's also a high bash quotient that keep the songs surging along. I hear a little bit of WHITE LUNG (without the gothic trappings) and NO LOVE's label mates JOINT D≠, the latter due to the sonic dust-cloud effect, and these are thrown into a hardcore swirl. Three years since their first 7", worth the wait.

Surrounded
BLOOD PRESSURE
12" *Beach Impediment*

The return of one of the best hardcore bands in the US, this is just as relentlessly raging as BLOOD PRESSURE's Need To Control album. Fast and burning, with Adam Thomas's angry-as-fuck vocals and one blazer going straight into the other. The execution is perfect and the anti-social attitude remains as in-your-face as ever. "Misanthropy," "Useless," "Hate"...you get the idea. Suffering no fools. This is the real shit, accept no substitute.

Punk Life Is Shit
PHYSIQUE
12" *Iron Lung*

"We make noise because noise is natures [sic] own politic." That's what it says on the back cover of this one-sided 12", and noise is what you get, although it's not wrapped in an impenetrable sonic cocoon. This Olympia band dishes out blistering / pulverizing fodder with the requisite DISCHARGE / DISORDER / KAAOS bent, all of it done at a fast clip, save for the pounding "Game." Reverb on the vocals and a razor-sharp musical attack.

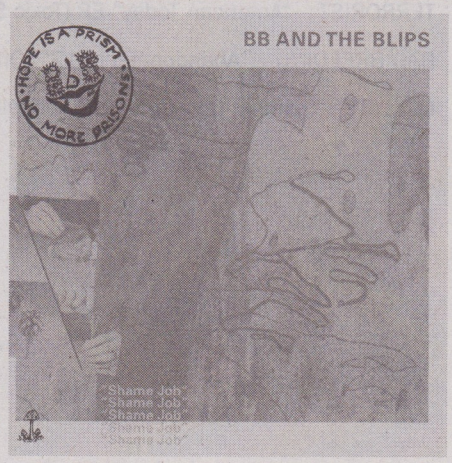


Mating Surfaces
LITHICS
LP *Kill Rock Stars*

Sharp, jabbing art-punk or post-punk or whatever hackneyed expression you want to use. Tightly-executed compositions with busy instrumental interplay and Aubrey Hornor's detached-sounding vocals. At times, there's a UK flavor to them. "Still Forms" is reminiscent of the FIRE ENGINES, for instance. "Boyce," meanwhile, has a No Wave vibe. Sometimes, they go for more of a straight-ahead punk sound, as with "Flat Rock" or "Dancing Guy," the latter of which also has some stop / start No Wavish flourishes. Nervy and edgy, throughout.

Shame Job
BB AND THE BLIPS
LP *Thrilling Living*

So my MRR compatriot Bryony Beynon (SCEPTRES, GOOD THROB, NASHO) relocated to Sydney, Australia and didn't waste a lot of time putting together a pretty damned good new band. Snappy and catchy songs, accompanied by Bryony's low to high, back and forth sweeping, sarcastic vocals. It flows easily from the title track's punk punch to the fast and furious "L.I.B.I.D.O." to thumping "Bitcoin Baby" to brooding "The Ballad of Personal Growth" to post-punkier "Cyborg." Sorry for the run-on sentence. This is a joy from start to finish, brimming with passion and fury, but it's also charming as hell.



Pork Sword Fever
COLD MEAT
EP *Helta Skelta / Static Shock*

Another Aussie band, this one from Perth, and they play tough, gnashing post-punk and Riot Grrrl-tinged punk (you following me here?). Ashley's commanding vocals are pissed-off sounding and, right from the outset, there's no missing the point of "Boys Riot"—"Alpha fuck off mate!" An exploration of interpersonal relationships and roles, done in stomping fashion.

Binasa
SIAL
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

This band from Singapore played Boston a few months back, and there was something I had to do that I absolutely, positively couldn't get out of, so I missed their show. And that's something I'm going to be kicking myself about for a long time to come. That's especially true when listening to this crushing EP. Trebly raw punk with barbed-wire guitar mangling and reverb on Izzad's vocals and she sounds like she could be Dru from CRIATURAS' Singapore sister. A sonic buzzsaw, as dangerous as a disturbed hornets nest.

Hounds
LIÉ
LP *Monofonus Press*

I need to thank the fine folks at MRR for exposing me to this band from their interview in issue #427. My interest was piqued and I checked out this album, their third, and it's a scorcher. Surging, jarring, jabbing rock with a dark edginess and a goth tinge. Ear-messing, swirling guitar lines, throbbing, distorted bass lines and hard-hitting drumming, along with vocals that pack both sadness and rage. You can hear a little SIOUXSIE SIOUX, although the timbre is lower. I mentioned WHITE LUNG in the NO LOVE review and there's a bit of that here, although LIÉ sound fierier.

Just bubbling under

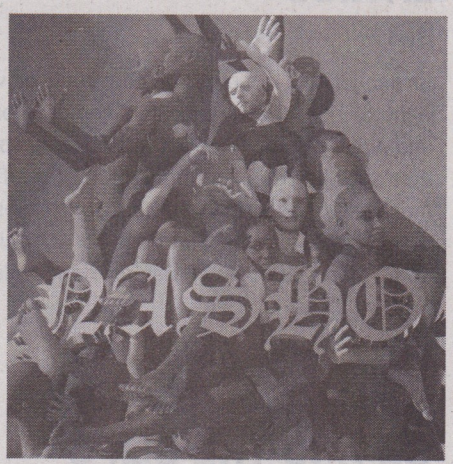
NASHO – "Nasho" LP (No Patience)

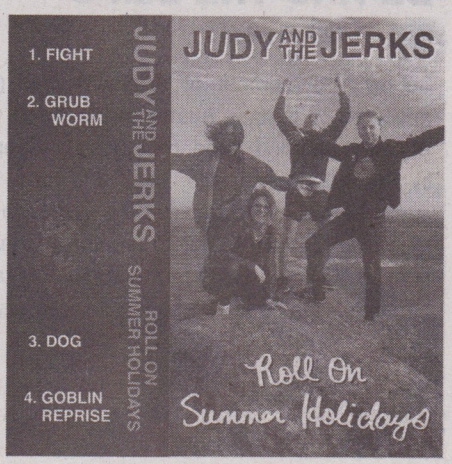
JUDY AND THE JERKS – "Roll On Summer Holidays" CS (Earth Girl)

TERRORIST – "American Today" EP (Toxic State)

BAD BREEDING – "Abandonment" 12" (One Little Indian)

COLLATE – "Liminal Concerns" LP (self-released)





JASON RYAN

Jason Ryan is a contributing reviewer for MRR and a local illustrator / graphic designer.

We Will All Pay The Price For Their Insanity
RUBBLE
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

This band from Singapore played Boston a few months back, and there was something I had to do that I absolutely, positively couldn't get out of, so I missed their show. And that's something I'm going to be kicking myself about for a long time to come. That's especially true when listening to this crushing EP. Trebly raw punk with barbed-wire guitar mangling and reverb on Izzad's vocals and she sounds like she could be Dru from CRIATURAS' Singapore sister. A sonic buzzsaw, as dangerous as a disturbed hornets nest.

Stay Free
CRUSADE
LP *Japankore*

I don't claim to know what it's like being a Japanese woman / a woman in any punk scene for that matter, but from what I've understood, sometimes you have to push your way through. Although this LP is a compilation of the CRUSADE cassette discography is from the early '90s, it was never before available on vinyl, so I'm offering it as a top release in 2018 as something new and refreshing.

Singularity to Extinction
BRAINOIL
LP *Tankcrimes*

Sludgepunk deathcrust album of the year. Find my review in issue #428.

Numb
FALSE RITUAL
EP *Doomsday*

Old school hardcore, like when it was called cyber-thrash by punks...Well, that's what this is, and if you do your own thing, you make the list. Another PDX outfit.

Dis Is Malmö 2018
V/A
LP *Not Enough*

There was a CD compilation in the '90s literally called Swedish HC Comp that I loved. Before that, a cassette, The Core of Sweden '81–'96. Well, here's a new one, on vinyl, so specific to this mangel city still exporting exceptional avenues of Scandinavian hardcore. I already knew some of these bands, love a few, never heard of a bunch. It's been a while since a comp like Dis.

Call of the Void
EXTENDED HELL
EP *Desolate*

Powerful intense NYHC punk with all the levels blown out to smoldering bits.

4 Trak Demo
PROJECT GBG
CS *Black Konflik*

Favorite demo of the year. Chaotic raw noise from Vancouver, BC. Find my review issue #425.

Tomorrow
HEADSPLITTERS
EP *self-released*

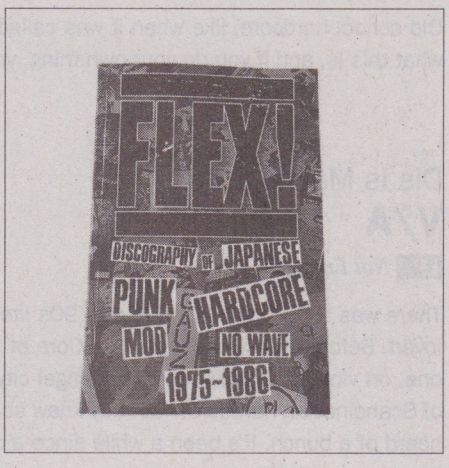
This list is almost Finnished [sic], I swear...Clobbering new stuff that sounds old. Another NYC outfit.

Cis Nightmare Still Continues
SYNTAX
CS *Vex*

Hailing from New Haven, a land of my previous lifetime, I listened intent on appreciating it. But make no mistake about the ferocity, this rages on its own. It scared, intimated and made me think outside of my comfort zone. Exactly the way a punk band should.

Discography of Japanese Punk Hardcore Mod No Wave 1975–1986
FLEX!

Hailing from New Haven, a land of my previous lifetime, I listened intent on appreciating it. But make no mistake about the ferocity, this rages on its own. It scared, intimated and made me think outside of my comfort zone. Exactly the way a punk band should.



Reissue / compilation mentions:

DISFEAR – "A Brutal Sight of War" (Disfear / Havoc / La Familia)

MELLAKKA – "1984–1986" box set (Svart)—THE BEST.

CONTRAST ATTITUDE – "12 Track Compilation" 12" (Distort Reality)

C.C. SERVON

C.C. Servon writes the new column on teens and punk right now. She's fifteen and has lived a bunch of different places, but is currently in Philly, where she makes a racket on drums in her band CHERRI COLA. She thinks "Alex Chilton" by the REPLACEMENTS is the greatest song of all time but that "Blank Generation" by RICHARD HELL AND THE VOIDOIDS is up there too.

Make Room
DESTROY BOYS
CD *Uncool*

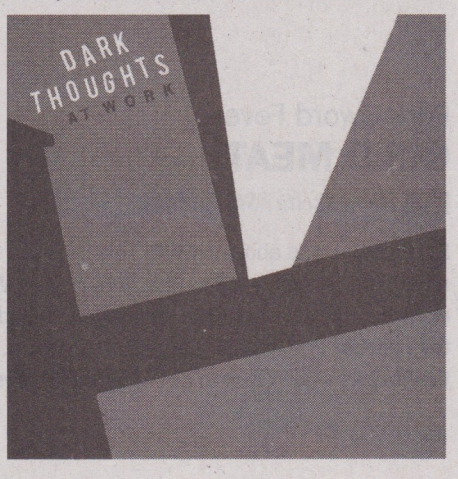
Make Room is the sonic equivalent of dyeing your hair even though you'll get in trouble, or stage diving for the first time, or that scene in A League of Their Own when the coach gets kicked off the field. The band wields their vulnerability like a weapon. The stand out tracks are "B.F.F.," "Methatonin," and "Duck Eat Duck World," all of which make you feel like throwing a drink on the face of the last person foolish enough to mess with you.

All At Once
SCREAMING FEMALES
LP *Don Giovanni*

To be totally honest, the singles for this album had me worried. I always get stressed out when a band I love announces a new record, especially when they're among my top five favorite bands of all time, but All At Once proved that I should relax a little. Singles like "Glass House" work much better in the context of the record. My favorite song is "Agnes Martin," a perfect example of the band's ability to blend their rhythm sections' funk with guitarist / singer Marissa Paternoster's anthemic shredding and vibrato-banshee vocals.

Mouth Sounds #2699
VACATION
LP *Let's Pretend*

These guys really remind me of another band, but despite racking my brain for weeks, I can't think of which one it is, and I've really got to submit this thing. They're bit like like EXPLODING HEARTS and a bit like RADIATOR HOSPITAL, but way amped up. There's tons of crazy, garage-y energy that veers left at the point of falling out of control into fuzzy power pop. They call themselves grit pop, which I guess that makes sense. Whatever that means, this is a killer record.

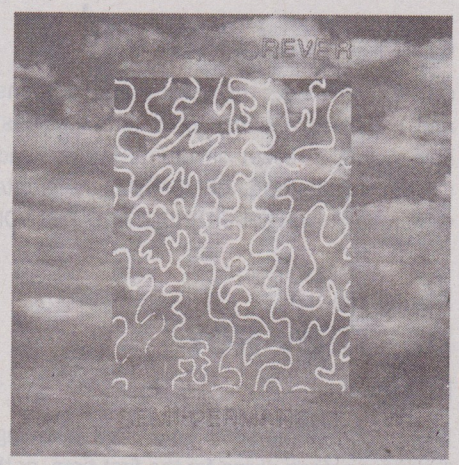


At Work
DARK THOUGHTS
LP *Drunken Sailor / Stupid Bag*

DARK THOUGHTS are RAMONES fans. You can tell just from At Work's cover art, which bears a significant resemblance to Leave Home. They even have a song called "Don't Wanna." However, they are far from RAMONES-core, which I usually think is a tired and worn-out genre lacking in energy. DARK THOUGHTS explode with caffeinated enthusiasm from the very first track, which is under a minute long. It's hard to choose a favorite song off this record, but I think I'll go with "Hate This Song," which exemplifies their ability to pack über-catchy melodies and sad humor into a minute-long song in an original way.

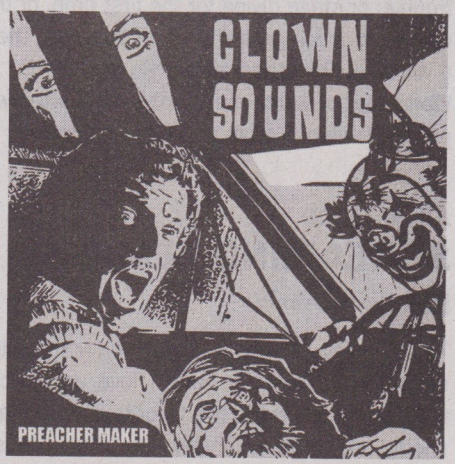
Semi-Permanent
KITTEN FOREVER
LP *Rat Queen*

DARK THOUGHTS are RAMONES fans. You can tell just from At Work's cover art, which bears a significant resemblance to Leave Home. They even have a song called "Don't Wanna." However, they are far from RAMONES-core, which I usually think is a tired and worn-out genre lacking in energy. DARK THOUGHTS explode with caffeinated enthusiasm from the very first track, which is under a minute long. It's hard to choose a favorite song off this record, but I think I'll go with "Hate This Song," which exemplifies their ability to pack über-catchy melodies and sad humor into a minute-long song in an original way.



Preacher Maker
CLOWN SOUNDS
LP *Recess*

When I first heard this record, I thought it sounded a lot like TOYS THAT KILL, who I love. After a bit of research, I found out that they're fronted by the same guy, Todd Congelliere. He's the boss of Recess Records. Everything I've heard of his is wonderful garage-y pop punk rock, and Preacher Maker is no exception. This is definitely a guy I'll have to look into more.



Ricky Hell and the Voidboys
RICKY HELL AND THE VOIDBOYS
LP *Greenway / Quality Time*

When I first saw this band's name, I thought they were a joke. But they're actually really good, which is a little surprising considering they have a clarinet. The clarinet gives it this weird klezmer feel, which is super cool. I also don't usually like very reverb-y vocals, but in this it works. As I'm writing this, I'm realizing that the probability of me liking this band was very low, but for whatever reason I think they're great. They do have that TELEVISION / RICHARD HELL vibe, but the melodies remind me more of a really depressed BLONDIE. This is especially clear on "Friday Eyes." This is a good album for listening to while walking around a city at an ungodly hour of the morning.

Pork Sword Fever
COLD MEAT
EP *Helta Skelta / Static Shock*

Here's one I read about in MRR! This is eleven minutes of calculated fury that keeps an exciting, sneering edge. Plus, they're from Western Australia, which makes them extra cool in my book. It's mocking and bludgeoning and kind of like G.L.O.S.S. thematically and lyrically, but not as hardcore. I really love the vocal delivery on all their tracks. I can't wait to see what these guys do on a full-length record.

Liz Taylor / Your Stupid Life
SHARKMUFFIN
EP *Little Dickman*

First things first, SHARKMUFFIN win the gold medal for the best band name on this list hands down. The music isn't bad either! I prefer the second track of of this single, "Your Stupid Life." It's only 1:20 minutes long. It starts out with vocals that are a little strange, and very '60s. Then it goes into this almost arena rock guitar solo that almost reminds me of QUEEN. And then it's done. It sounds odd, but trust me, this is a great band.

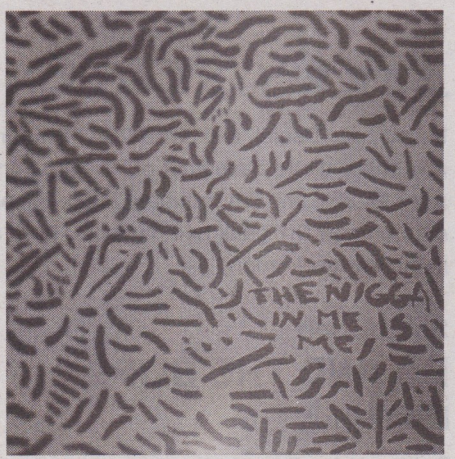
Songs of Praise
SHAME
LP *Dead Oceans*

This is some top of the class, über English punk in the vein of IDLES. I love the chant of "I hope that you're hearing me" on "Concrete." I love the overall extra weird IAN DURY-esque pop feel of the album. I love the way SHAME are self-deprecating, but in a real way. I hear a lot of bands do the self-deprecating thing to make themselves look better, which never works. These guys make fun of their looks and musical abilities, but are also empowering in a human way at the same time. I'd also recommend checking out their rad cover of "Rock Lobster."

▪ RAMY SILYAN

Ramy Silyan is a record reviewer at Maximum Rocknroll.
In no particular order.

Friends. Lovers. Favorites.
HIRS COLLECTIVE
LP *Get Better / SRA*



Tour Tape 2K18 (For the Homie)
SOUL GLO
CS *self-released*

A Patient Man
CULT LEADER
LP *Deathwish*

rexmanningday
REX MANNING DAY
LP *Get Better*

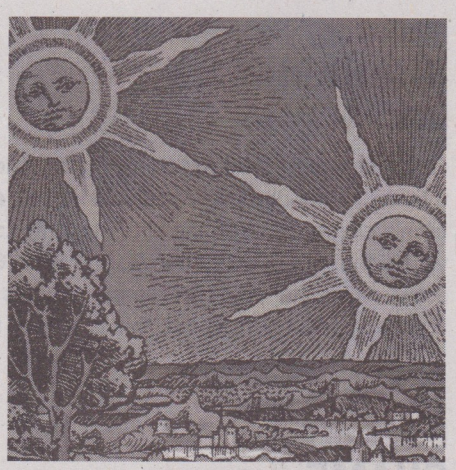
Unjustified
NO RIGHT
CS *Bitter Melody*

U.S. Decay
BODY PRESSURE
LP *self-released*

Punk Life Is Shit
PHYSIQUE
12" *Iron Lung*

Barbed Wire Entanglement / On a Wheel
LILAC
45 *25 Diamonds*

Chrysanthemum
CHRYSANTHEMUM
CS *self-released*



▪ SORRY STATE

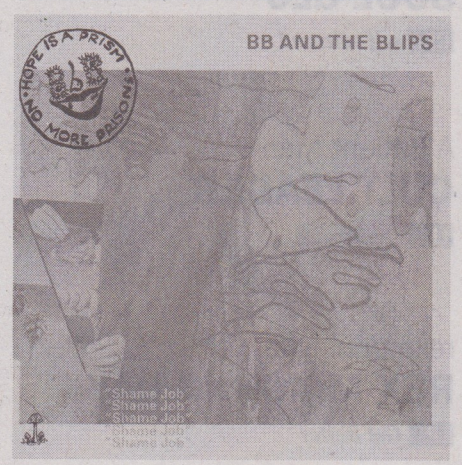
My name is Daniel, and since 2004 I've run Sorry State, a record store, label, and online distro based out of Raleigh, North Carolina. I'm a lifelong hardcore punk fanatic, and I'm fortunate that a big part of my job involves staying up to date on new DIY punk and hardcore. Here are ten of my favorites from 2018, in alphabetical order:

Shame Job
BB AND THE BLIPS
LP *Thrilling Living*

Thrilling Living Records has been a staple of my year-end lists ever since they started. You should get everything they release, but if I had to pick one from 2018, this LP from Australia's BB AND THE BLIPS would be my choice. Incisive, insightful lyrics, a through-the-roof energy level, perfectly raw production, and hooks for days... this record has it all.

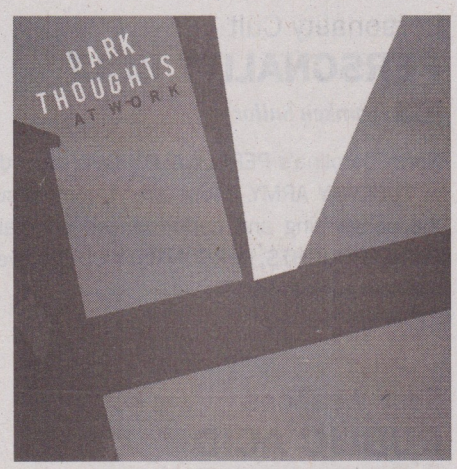
Surrounded
BLOOD PRESSURE
12" *Beach Impediment*

Pittsburgh's BLOOD PRESSURE follow up their first LP with an even more powerful statement. A little less frantic than their debut, Surrounded sacrifices a touch of speed but gains a lot more power. If you like being steamrolled by your hardcore records, this is probably your favorite record of 2018.



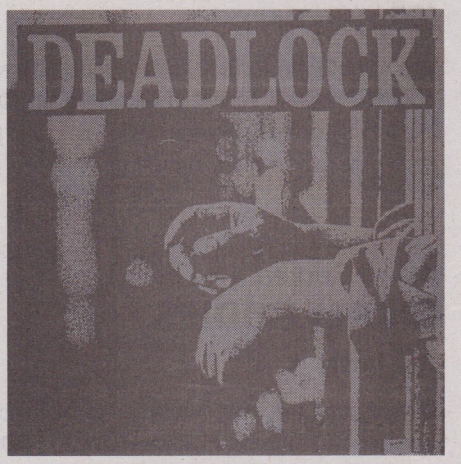
At Work
DARK THOUGHTS
LP *Drunken Sailor / Stupid Bag*

Philly's DARK THOUGHTS are the melodic punk band that it's OK for people into hardcore to like. That's not just because they wear cooler band t-shirts than most pop punk bands (though they do), but rather because they have everything that's great about RAMONES-based pop punk and none of the corniness that made a lot of us grow out of that scene.



Repetition
DEADLOCK
EP *Painkiller*

This transatlantic project record featuring members of VIOLENT REACTION, ARMS RACE, and NO TOLERANCE came and went without a lot of fanfare, but it's a sleeper hit. Packing nine tracks onto a 7" with spot-on, Don Zientara circa 1981 production, this one is highly recommended for the '80s USHC purist.



Build Yourself Up So Many Times Only To Be Brought Down Again And Again
HOLOGRAM
EP *Hysteria / La Vida Es Un Mus*

I love hardcore bands that experiment with different sounds and textures than your typical guitar / bass / drums / vocals setup, and I also love loose and wild-sounding '80s Italian hardcore. HOLOGRAM combines both of those things on this record and it's one of the most exciting and forward-thinking things I heard this year.

Idiota Civilizzato
IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO
LP *Static Shock*

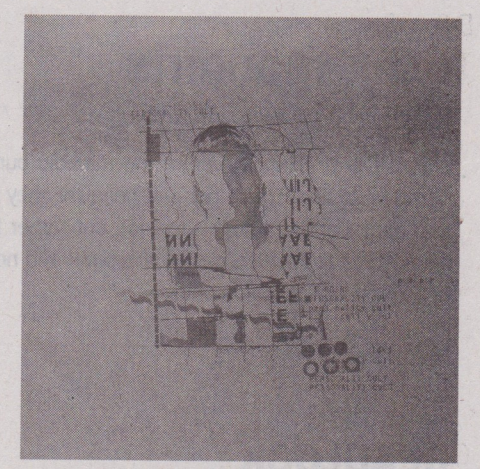
Speaking of '80s Italian hardcore, Germany's IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO is certainly rooted in that sound. However, in addition to the wildness and dissonance that comes from bands like WRETCHED, NEGAZIONE, and CCM, IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO's ability to get deep in the pocket is rivaled only by contemporary bands like S.H.I.T., BLAZING EYE, and IMPALERS.

2017
KALEIDOSCOPE
EP *D4MT Labs Inc.*

KALEIDOSCOPE has been one of the most exciting bands in punk since they started, but their latest EP is their best stuff yet. We already knew they were a great hardcore band, but who knew they could write a Krautrock-influenced dance floor banger like "Scorched Earth," which might be my single favorite track of 2018?

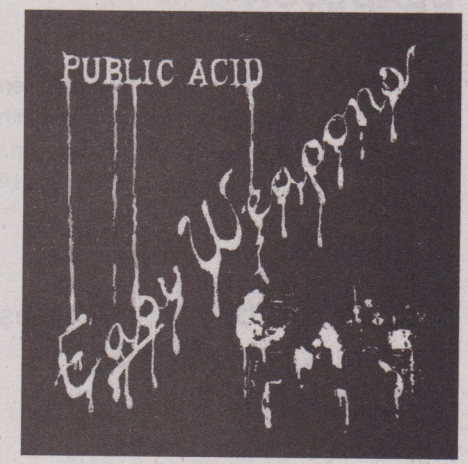
Personality Cult
PERSONALITY CULT
LP *Drunken Sailor*

North Carolina's PERSONALITY CULT sounds like the BUZZCOCKS with a dash of TUBEWAY ARMY. Those aren't comparisons to be thrown around lightly, but the songwriting and performances on their debut record warrant them. Like DARK THOUGHTS, PERSONALITY CULT prove that it's still possible to make great melodic punk in 2018.



Easy Weapons
PUBLIC ACID
LP *self-released*

Like HOLOGRAM, PUBLIC ACID sound both savage and progressive. The drums come from the no-flash school of early POISON IDEA, but the wild, G.I.S.M.-esque riffs, frightening vocals, impressionistic lyrics, and fuzz and noise-drenched production all contribute to a uniquely sinister atmosphere.



Warm Bodies
WARM BODIES
LP *Lumpy*

One of punk's guiding principles is that technical proficiency isn't necessary to create powerful music. However, WARM BODIES prove that being really good at your instrument doesn't disqualify you from making great punk either. This LP is a total shred fest, but it's also one of the wildest and most energetic records I've ever heard.

ALI TADAYON

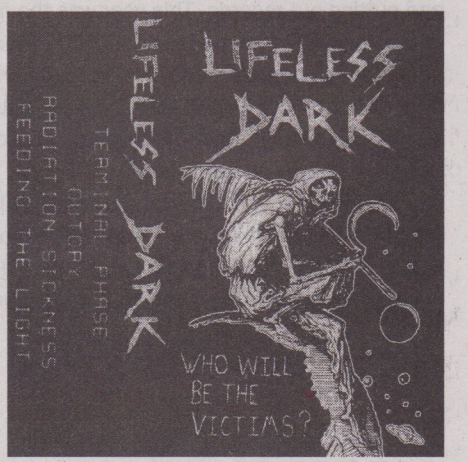
Ali Tadayon is a record reviewer for MRR.

The way I experience punk has really changed over the years. For the past few years up until 2018, I was really keeping up on what's going on—buying a lot of new records from my go-to labels, following the punk cool kids on Instagram, etc. This year, things changed. I fell into a really great group of friends and bandmates, and when I think of my favorite records of the year I don't think of what had the most hype; I think of what makes me conjure up fond memories. Those include being collectively stoked with my band about the new WARTHOG 7", feeling an immense sense of hometown pride at the first annual Fear of Noise fest in San Diego, watching my friends in CINZA get gnarlier and gnarlier at every show, and feeling represented as both a Persian and a die hard DISCHARGE fan at KHIIS shows in the Bay.

Surrounded
BLOOD PRESSURE
12" *Beach Impediment*

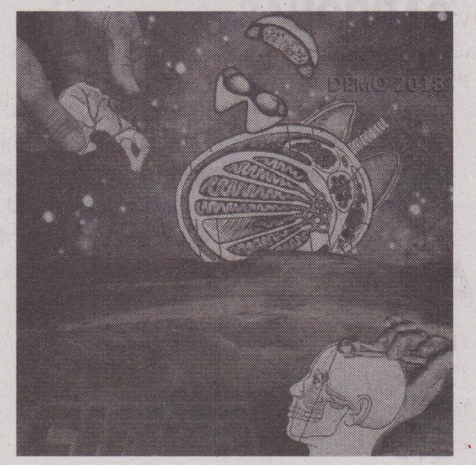
Demons
THE DARK
EP *Darker*

Who Will Be the Victims?
LIFELESS DARK
CS *self-released*



Corroded
WARTHOG
EP *Toxic State*

Demo
CINZA
CS *self-released*



Lies
ROD OF CORRECTION
12" *Indecision*

Demo 2018
THERAPY
CS *self-released*

The Beast
ARMS RACE
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus*

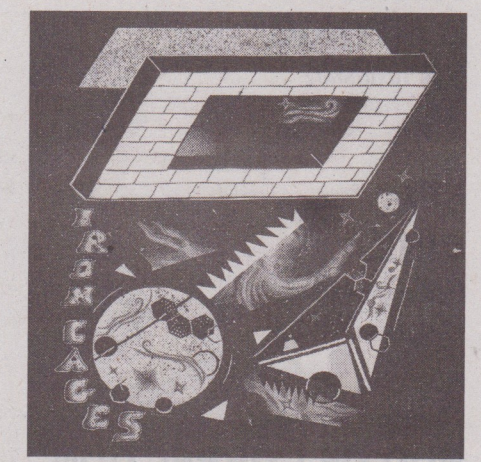
Saboor
KHIIS
EP *Distort Reality*

Indulgence
IRON CAGES
EP *Hog Wild / Society Bleeds*

TOTAL PUNK

Total Punk is a label run by Rich Evans in Orlando, Florida. Rich also drums in Golden Pelicans.

2018 wasn't without its downs, but man, what a year. I put out two LPs and eight singles on Total Punk, started work on a new label called Mind Meld (Timmy Vulgar's Genetic Armageddon LP out next month), a new job that I love, did lots of traveling, and started a wrestling promotion with some friends. Probably the busiest year of my life, but I somehow managed to find time to listen to a ton of music. I revisited a lot of records from my youth as well as stuff from the early / mid 2000s. For me, the most exciting period of music I've lived through. It's when I first started booking shows, running the distro, and putting out records. This year was the first that I felt the pangs of nostalgia (a true sign of middle age) and I fully embraced it. 2018 wasn't all about the punk, though. If someone would have told me I would spend this year listening to a steady diet of ELO, ABBA, and NEIL YOUNG, I wouldn't have believed them, but that is exactly how this year played out. TOTALLY NOT PUNK! I haven't thrown in the towel yet, though. I've got a few more years of stamping left in me, and I still found time to get completely obsessed with quite a few 2018 releases, ten of which are listed below. Looking forward to 2019. Brand new GOLDEN PELICANS LP as well as some big tour plans, going to Puerto Rico in February and Norway in May, and much more wrestling action on Mills!!!

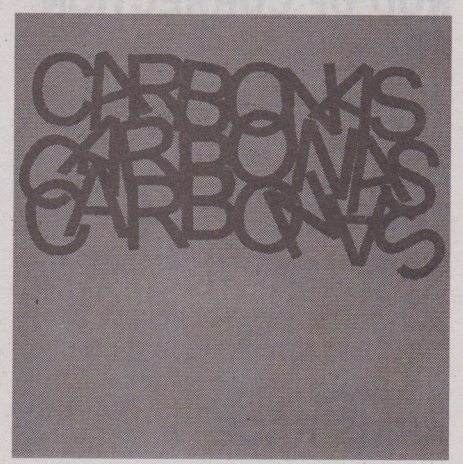


Your Moral Superiors

CARBONAS

LP *Goner*

Case in point about revisiting the "aughts." CARBONAS put out some of my favorite singles of that period, many of which I still play regularly DJing, and having them all in one place is enough to get excited about. The fact that it is piled on with a ton of top quality unreleased material made this one of my best purchases of 2018. I'm even more excited that they are now back to doing the occasional show. See you in January, Atlanta.



High Voltage and Uncontrolled

SIC

LP *Belgian Waffles*

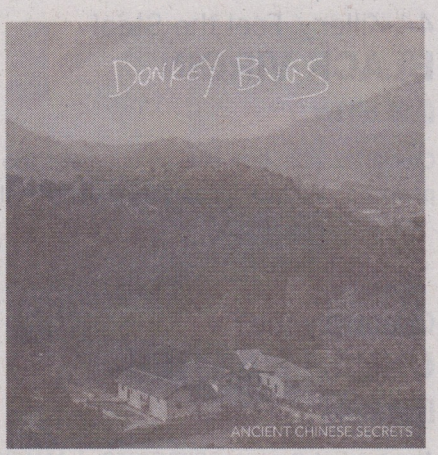
It's wild that we've reached 40 years into this punk thing and there are still gems like this from its beginnings to be mined! Apparently SIC went on to become a minimal synth outfit in the early '80s, but these recordings from 1977 find these Belgians making some viciously tight and pounding synth punk with a real proto edge and some of the nastiest female vocals I've ever heard. Nineteen songs total and absolutely killer front to back. I can't believe more people aren't raving about this one.

Ancient Chinese Secrets

DONKEY BUGS

LP *Fish*

Next time someone tells you that modern music is boring and derivative, put this on. Not sure who makes up the ranks of this Cleveland clan, but in a time when "weird" has just become another lazy tagline, they managed to put out one of the most captivatingly weird albums I've heard in a long time. I hope this wasn't a one off thing and that there is more Donkey Bugs to be delivered.



Best Of" EP / "Well You Want To Make A Record

PLASTIC EP & THE RECORDS

EP *Xerox Music*

PLASTIC EP & THE RECORDS were from Melbourne and released two singles between '81 and '82 and recorded a third, ironically titled Well You Want To Make A Record, that never saw the light of day. New Australian label Xerox Music compiled all three 7"s on these two slabs. At times almost sounding like a goofy STRANGLERS, at others like a herky jerky PENETRATORS, and on the one record they go straight new wave with great results. Kicking out the drummer and replacing him with a drum machine that goes by the name of Dr. Rhythm and with the addition of an organ player / producer named Rudy who has set his organ to the tuba setting. Add to that dog barking and baby crying sound effects and electronic hand claps. As strange as it all sounds, they manage to make it work. On top of that, Plastic has a YouTube channel he runs and still updates that I recommend visiting. Easily my most fun discovery of 2018, and the one I probably talked about the most.

New Vietnam / Those Who No

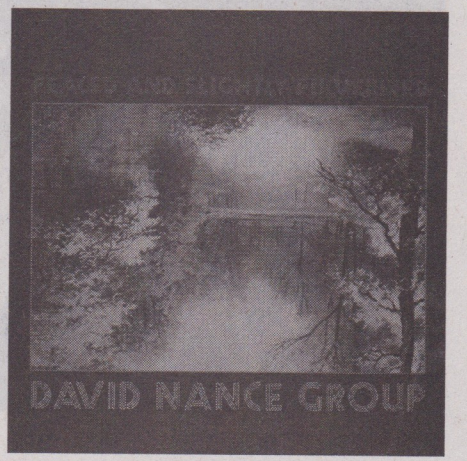
CIVIC

12" *Anti-Fade*

Quickly becoming my new favorite Australian band. They put out two killer records in the course of 2018. New Vietnam harkens back to the days of late '70s Aussie punk. They bash out seven hard rocking hits in just under twenty minutes. It's quite a powerful debut, and the 7" that followed is far from a slouch. Those Who No puts the pop hooks out in front, and "Pleasure" is one of the best songs I heard in 2018.

Peaced and Slightly Pulverized
DAVID NANCE GROUP
LP *Trouble In Mind*

When I wasn't listening to NEIL YOUNG, I was listening to DAVID NANCE. I spent the first half of the year obsessing over the previous two LPs, and ended the year with Peaced and Slightly Pulverized being routinely flipped on my turntable. This year had some serious bumpy turns, and David Nance was there to get me through many of them. He is a seriously gifted songwriter, and seeing his group live was one of my highlights of the year. Cannot wait to see what he comes up with for my new label.



44 Killer / Feel the Steel
BLACK VIRGIN
45 *WYLN*

Crucial reissue. Lo-fi punked out metal two sider from early '80s New York. The perfect soundtrack for smashing beers in the parking lot.

Cheap Nasties
CHEAP NASTIES
LP *HoZac*

Absolutely killer pre-SCIENTISTS / MANIKINS thugged out punk from Perth, Australia. Lo-fi scuzzy and absolutely brutal. The kind of record you can put on when DJing and just walk away.

NIHON NOWAVE
V/A
LP *Mecanica*

One of the great things about music is no matter how long you have been listening, there is always something new to discover. Such is the case with this comp of early '80s Japanese electronic music inspired by no wave, and post punk. Thankfully, labels like Bitter Lake are now reissuing this kind of stuff because it's been my favorite discovery of 2018.

I'm Terry
TERRY
LP *Upset! The Rhythm*

I'm a total TERRYhead. They are three for three now. I'm sure there are bands who sound like them who I have made fun of my friends for listening to, but something about their songwriting approach really speaks to me. Perfectly layered but simple songs. I approach each new TERRY LP with a hefty dose of skepticism. Do I really need another TERRY LP? And each time the answer is a resounding yes.

SADIE

The first show I booked this year was for a visiting six year old named SADIE, who ended her Disney vacation playing a brand of music she self describes as "Skull Rock" to a room of people mostly five times her age. She had song titles like "Nightmare Moon" and the aforementioned "Skull Rock." SADIE stood in front of a room full of strangers with nothing but her leather jacket, a small synth, a drum machine, and a healthy dose of confidence and commanded their attention. I've followed her since through updates from her parents and her Instagram account. She played Cropped Out Fest a couple months ago, a series of shows a few weekends ago, and her first release showed up in the mail just last week, a self-released five song cassette titled Lost In Space. While full grown adults are out there complaining about their scene sucking or the state of modern music, there is a six year old sitting in her room in Columbus actually doing something about it.

BEN TRGDON

New York, NY
Rock 'N' Roll Forever! / Nuts! / Tattoo Punk – Fanzines
Vanity / Sister Anne – Bands

Lucky 7's
TWISTED THING

CS *self-released*

The vox are hell nasty-ass double psycho sounding. They are the demon voices rattling around your caged mind. It's tough and they're so cool. Coolest band. Hard mosh HC.

American Today
TERRORIST

EP *Toxic State*

Catchy riffs and interesting rhythm. You can bop and bounce. His accent is real! He's from England! This is not a put-on or a joke!

Desesperación
TENSIÓN 73

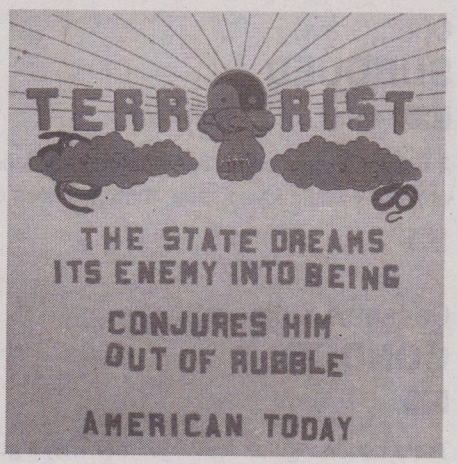
CS *Navaja / Orate Asusta A Turistas Con Motosierra*

RAW punk with heart and feeling. From Chile. I love the way everything sounds on this tape. Punk spilling out of a tin garbage can. The songs are great too. Well written with good details, but to the point. They sing about actual shit and are actual real life 100% all-the-time punks.

American Today
TERRORIST

EP *Toxic State*

Catchy riffs and interesting rhythm. You can bop and bounce. His accent is real! He's from England! This is not a put-on or a joke!

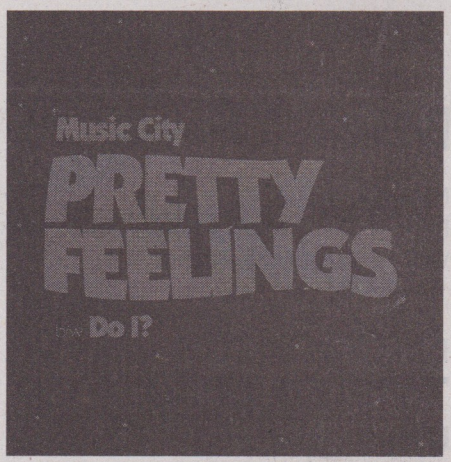


Demo
D.I.N.A.
CS *self-released*

Rapid, chaotic and desperate. Also from Chile. Named for the secret police that tortured, raped and killed thousands of people while Chile was controlled by the fascist dictator Pinochet, from 1973 to 1990. (Also where TENSIÓN 73 gets their name.)

Public Apology
ELECTRIC CHAIR
EP *Stucco*

Fast Scandi sounding HC. It's cool: they look new wave but they're hardcore.



Pretty Feelings / Do I
MUSIC CITY
45 *Static Shock*

Slick sliding honey vocals. Almost makes me feel like "Summer of '69" cuz so smooth, nice and memorable. It's like a fluffernutter sandwich.

Zygome
ZYGOME
CS *self-released*

Modern crust has forgotten about the freaky roots of the genre, but ZYGOME hasn't. They have some incredible acid trip prog rock parts and there's a HELL HAMMER-esque breakdown that's a brain kicker!

Corroded
WARTHOG
EP *Toxic State*

"Brainwasher" is such a cool song. Name is like a rollercoaster and the song is what plays over the speakers when you're waiting in line for it! You're gonna die!

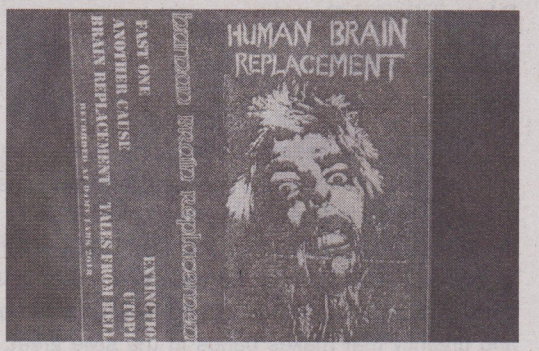
Open Grave
SUBDUED
EP *La Vida Es Un Mus Records*

A beautiful band and a beautiful record. A band of artists, poets and a leather worker—I would love to see what their lives are like at home in London.

Cassette Single #2
CONDOR
CS *self-released*

The emotional guitar leads got me! They'll get you too!

Demo
HUMAN BRAIN REPLACEMENT
CS *self-released*



Fast hardcore D-beat punk. The drums sound and feel like a mess of arms and limbs, like Taz on the drum kit, whirling hair and skin. The vocals are deep and powerful. Sitting here in December 2018, listening to the YouTube video of the demo, it's hard to imagine this voice coming out of a skinny blonde kid from Texas, but that's who was doing it. RIP Parker Sheridan.

Thanks to my pals Sam Slug and Mateo Hog for helping me out with this list. And as always, thank you to my editor Tessa. Please send me demos of your punk bands and photos of your tattoos! BCT / PO Box 1959 / NY, NY 10013

ANDREW UNDERWOOD

Andrew Underwood is a reviewer and columnist for MRR.

Ugh, another goddamn year down the drain. A few highlights, plenty of lowlights, and about a thousand beers past January 1, 2018, all I can do is salute the outgoing year with a double bird. Fuck it. To be honest, it would have been very easy to fill an entire best of 2018 with just the amazing reissues that have happened this year. From relatively obscure bands like SODOM, HELLBENT, RAPT, GAIZIN, NO JAP, and AGAINST to the 30th anniversary reissues of the RIPCORD and HERESY stuff, there's plenty of great stuff that punk's archaeologists and archivists made available to the masses. However, that would be a pretty cynical move, and to be honest, it wasn't terribly hard to come up with ten fantastic standout records.

Hard Core Punk Trucks
V/A
CD *Blood Sucker*

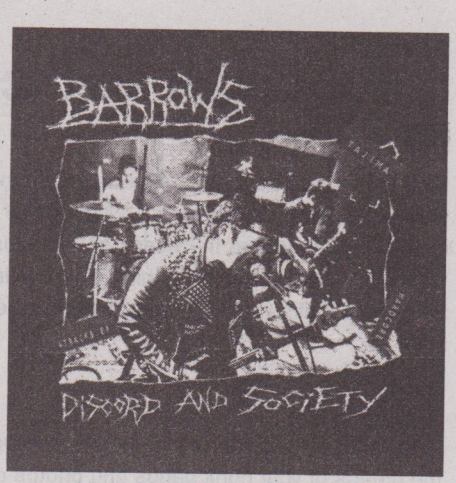
Hands-down the best compilation of the year, with four of Japan's best bands offering up a full EP's worth of material each. While one could easily imagine any or all of these bands sharing a stage, there was plenty of stylistic diversity on display, from CHEERIO's pumped-up party hardcore to RAPPA's vicious no-frills D-beat. Add the strongest material yet from the inimitable CROSSFACE and the final tracks from the now-departed NEMESIS, and this is a must-have for not just the Japanese hardcore fanatics but any punk with an appreciation for the harder stuff.

Discord and Society

BARROWS

EP *self-released*

BARROWS are the epitome of DIY at its finest. Small town punx making a scene happen, from recording and releasing their own music to starting up a live series to bring in bands from all over Japan, BARROWS are not waiting for anything to fall into their hands. Their story reminds me very much of NO FUCKER back in the early '00s in Utica. Of course, the comparison also carries over to the music, which is ragged, desperate blown-out D-beat / crust with all the pathos and urgency that makes bands in the style great. From top to bottom, this is absolutely the most punk record of 2018.



猥褻外道

THE TITS

EP *T.T. Records*

What is there to say about this band? Noise core so pure and on point that it could just as easily have appeared on a release by Anarchy Centre or Blue Jug as their own label. The primary comparison is "Who The Helpless"-era KURO, but their sound is entirely their own, more bristly and punk than metal-minded, with a surprising amount of melody stabbing through the fuzz. There's an LP coming in 2019, please expect to be blown away.

ASOCIAL TERROR FABRICATION / INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL

LP *Doomed to Extinction*

Both of these bands are somewhat phantasmagoric, so I was as interested to hear which version of each band appeared on the record as I was to hear that they were paired on a split LP. As it turns out, both bands played to their strengths and absolutely killed it in the process. ATF brought vile stench-core to the table, saturated with massive riffs, throat-shredding vocals and epic song structures while IOS offered up whittled-down, urgent crust that packed just the right amount of riffs and changes per song to stay interesting without being over-thought.

For Survival Punx

100SWINDLE

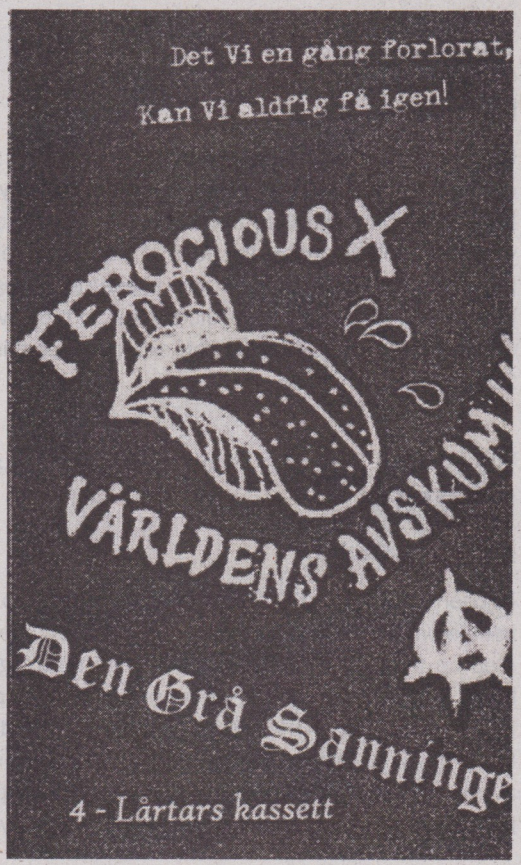
EP *Bater / General Speech*

Is it any wonder that this is one of the best punk records of the year when the members have been kicking around the hardcore scene for four fucking decades?! Consisting of the majority of the members of cult Japanese hardcore band POISON COLA, 100SWINDLE offer up a whirlwind of high-energy traditional Japanese hardcore (the very style they helped to pioneer in the mid-'80s) with heaps of killer leads, gang vocals and the kind of propulsive drive that most bands lose when they hit their 30s. No self-indulgent studio polish to be found here (unlike a lot of bands their age), just raw fucking hardcore with the gnarliest bass tone this side of the town dump.

Den Grå Sanningen
FEROCIOUS X

CS *FX Tapes*

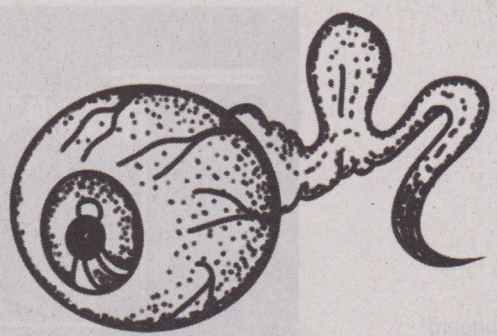
The first new release from these long-running crasher crust stalwarts since the unreleased tracks from their 2015 discography CD proved that FEROCIOUS X haven't been wasting their downtime. Three original tracks of nasty, brutish and short GBG-meets-Osaka noize and a fucking FEAR OF GOD cover that ranks among the best ever put to tape, all wrapped up in some of the best punk record art you'll see in 2018. Flawless.



I Don't Need It
X-V.I.D.E.O.

EP *self-released*

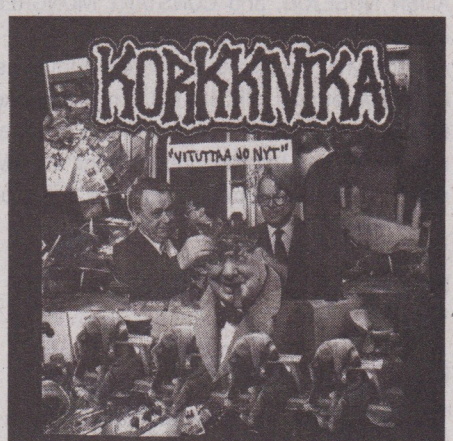
This is not exactly my usual fare, but far be it from me to not give quality its due. These Osaka punk rockers walk a fine line between raw '77-style punk and wild garage rock, leaning on the spit and danger of the former and the loose explosiveness of the latter. All I know is that the guitar sound is dialed in to "rusty razor blade," the songs are catchy as fuck, and the record is just as fun to look at as it is to play. File next to BLACK AND WHITE and the GEROS as top-tier Japanese trash punk.



Vituttaa Jo Nyt
KORKKIVIKA

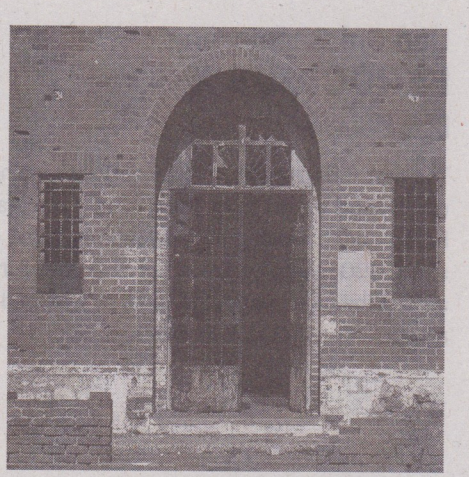
EP *Roku*

Out of every new punk record I got assigned to review at the magazine this year, this EP was my favorite. Tight, extremely well written and played melodic punk that owes as much to Swedish Käng a la ASTA KASK as it does to Finnish forebears like LAMA and RATSIA. KORKKIVIKA indulge in very little of the melancholy that characterized more recent Scandinavian melodic punk bands, just straightforward, short and catchy songs with great hooks and the kind of raspy vocals that have always perfectly complemented the style. This is a sleeper hit, the kind of record that'll be easy to pick up until people realize how great it is and suddenly it's gone.



Σταύρωση
ANTIMOB
CS *self-released*

It kind of feels like cheating to put this on a best of 2018 list since all the tracks on this release save one will be appearing on vinyl next year, but on the other hand, fuck it, rough mixes and all this is still one of the best recordings of the year. ANTIMOB are still at the head of the pack in terms of "Western" bands that play Japanese-style hardcore, and these new songs inject a little more metal into the mix while staying absolutely true to their overall sound. If these are just the first takes, you can absolutely expect to see this stuff again on the pages of 2019's "Best Of" issue.



We Will All Pay The Price For Their Insanity
RUBBLE
LP *Distort Reality*

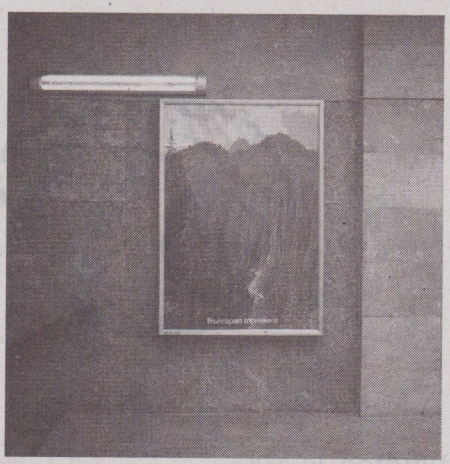
I'd been following RUBBLE since the demo days, so I thought I had a pretty good handle on their sound, but I was completely unprepared for this LP. It's a huge step up from their earlier material, total lightning in a bottle! Combining the heart, politics, and melodic sense of early British peace punk with the grit and propulsive attack of the UK'82 bands, dominated by Mare's killer vocals and lyrics, this is not so much a tribute to band from a certain place and era as it is a timeless entry into a canon of great records that came before. This definitely has my vote for best American punk record of the year.

JENSEN WARD

Jensen Ward runs Iron Lung Records.

Ahead Of Two Thoughts
EXEK
LP *W.25th*

This post-punk dub-infused master stroke is like a PIL VHS left on the dashboard just long enough to melt all the horse shit and pretense out of it. A perfect blend of the limitless creativity and heat damaged sensibility of the current Aussie home-recording scene that features more amazing 2018 bands like the SHIFTERS, ALIEN NOSEJOB, and CONSTANT MONGREL. Ahead Of Two Thoughts stands above all of that for me, though. Something about the vibe of it just resonates. And the lyric (though out of context from the song) "I wouldn't have a clue how to lose" perpetually rolls around in my head like a goddamn mantra or something. I don't know what it is about that country and their inherent understanding of rock music, but they continually wring the sweat towel for ideas, and the pool is nowhere near evaporation. They just get it, period.



Nightmare In A Damaged Brain
VILE GASH
LP *Youth Attack*

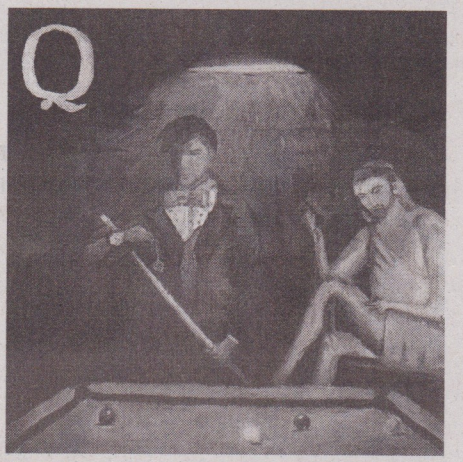
The acidic violence of the last track alone is enough to compel a murder or two, easy. Pure fucking rage.

Second

Q

EP *Lumpy*

Martin told me some time ago that there was another Q 7" recorded but they were sitting on the recording for some reason. Madness! I mean, it's not like they were hand making elaborate packaging one at a time or waiting for special trees to produce the right reams of paper worthy of that painting on the cover. Well, they finally released it, and fuck, it's sick. Complicated arrangements tailor made for mindless pounding. Well worth the wait.



Castration Anxiety

HIDE

LP *Dais*

On the occasion of Robert and Karoline's twentieth, IRON LUNG had the extreme pleasure of playing with HIDE, a band unknown to me that someone had simply described as "dancey." Well, that was misleading! HIDE floored me. Their music that night was intense, spacious, jarring, and powerful. It was a perfect night that I'll never forget. And I discovered as this LP came out a few months later that all of what I saw that night is on Castration Anxiety. If you think it's weird that I included an industrial record on a pretty well known dance goth label, then look up Heather and Seth and see where all this energy is rooted. You'll know to never question me again.

Aus

AUS

LP *Static Age*

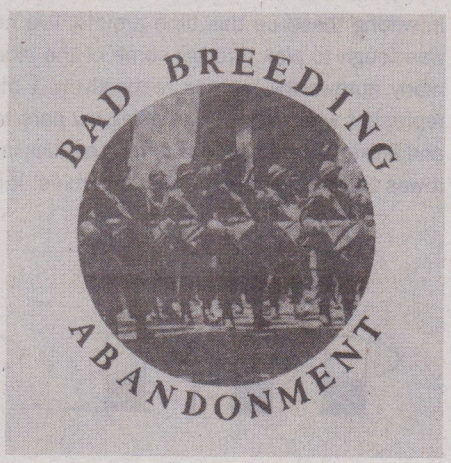
Berlin goth punk absolutely nailing it on their first musical outing. Crumbling bewitched atmospheres played just jaggedly enough to keep you on the waking side of the ledge. Perfect. It's goddamn invigorating to hear good songwriting taken seriously in a genre that's long overdue for a funeral.

Abandonment

BAD BREEDING

12" *One Little Indian*

Politically driven and passionately noisy UK anarcho-punk that self-proclaims to be allergic to power chords somehow manages to rise above all the trappings those tags may conjure. Again. And this time properly placed on FLUX OF PINK INDIANS' record label. They just keep getting better and better, and they were already better than most to begin with. Damn.



Tried And True

WASTE MANAGEMENT

LP *Painkiller*

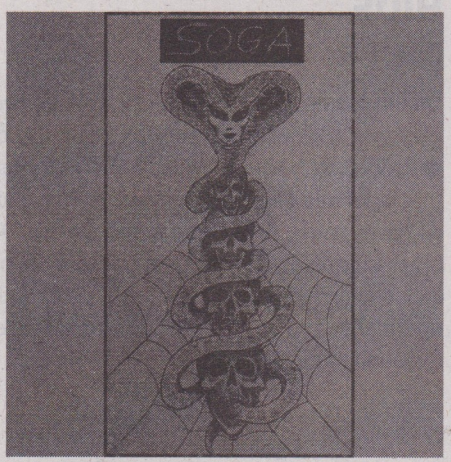
Another flawless victory.

Demo
D7Y
CS *PBP*

The blessed union of DAUÐYFLIN and ROHT playing ice hammer raw-beat in the Swedish vein? Uh, yes. Now music for endless indignation. I can't wait to hear what is coming next.

Demo
SOGA
---- *Self Released*

The fire and fun are perfectly balanced on SOGA's initial output. Delirious sweaty hardcore from Mexico City via a trio of women with lengthy list of credits that include RIÑA and CREMALLERAS. All it took was the guitar playing on the first song and I was all the way in. You can just feel the energy bouncing off the walls. ¡Quiero más!



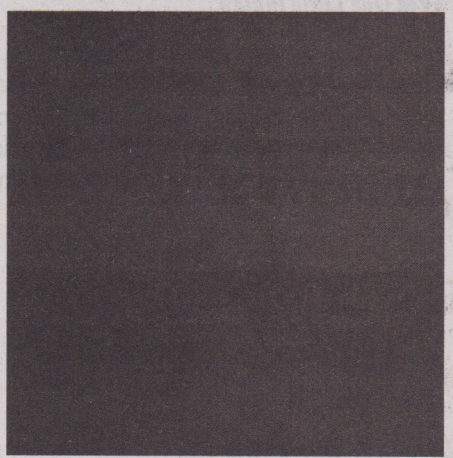
Stiff Prescription
BETA BLOCKERS
12" *Static Shock*

BETA BLOCKERS casually avoid stereotyping while fiercely provoking the fainthearted. Too punk for the noise rockers and too noise rock for the punks. Heavy, unsettling music with tastefully odd bangs and scrapes folded into just the right trigger points. This LP could knock a tooth loose if you're not careful.

Leave Your Body
SBSM
EP *Thrilling Living*

This is total maniac music. Imagine the singer of DIRT joining MISSING FOUNDATION to play a set of EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN covers on NEON JUDGEMENT's gear. That kiiiind of scratches the surface here. I fucking love this record.

In writing these up this time around, I've noticed a grouping theme emerge. It was tough to pick through some of the labels / scenes / crews that released many noteworthy records respectively. I tried to just let one record per blob represent what has been kicking my ears to dust lately. Big respect to Iceland and Mexico scenes for being fresh as fuck in 2018. Also, Youth Attack this year... it was tough to pick just one. Punk rules. It is my home.



× THE END ×

erik nervous, bikini cops, impotentie, the fritz, iss, freak genes, fashionism, the whiffs, sex tourists, denim and leather, dark thoughts, slumb party, personality cult, c.h.e.w. vanilla poppers, vintage crop, urochromes.

www.drunkensailorrecords.co.uk

TOLIVEALIE

SIX BREW BANTHA- Blight LP

Canadian grindcore vets have perfected their over-the-top brutal sound. Comes highly recommended and is one of TLAL's favorite grindcore recs.

HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH - FORBIDDEN ... LP

Are you tired of fast punk sounded like it was recorded by a flip phone? HoD summon THE NEOS, LARM, ELECTRO-HIPIES in hi-fi. Best fastcore.

MARXBROS / TRAVØLTA - split LP

MxB is members of LARM & SEEIN' RED paired with C. Dodge from SPAZZ (holy crap!) and TRAV is ripping Belgian fast political hardcore. You Shouldn't miss this.

STILL HOT : SEX PRIS/HD - spl LP, WVRM LP, Nashgul LP, Oxidant 7", Burnout 7", Despise You /Coke Bust 7"

TOLIVEALIE.COM

Distributed by ILD and Ebullition

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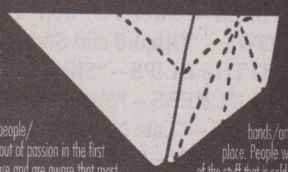
TRUST



We like to meet people/ bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

"NEVER MIND WHAT THEY'RE SELLING- IT'S WHAT YOU ARE BUYING"

NEW RELEASES

The Sensation Seekers (SCT)
Jerk Beat – LP
Cinematic Hammond freakbeat by members of The Thanes and Les Bof!

Romskip (NO)
Ting betyr ingenting – 7"
Slacker indie rock with garage and psychedelia vibes.

The Hiveminds (NO)
No Fun No More – 7"
Raw mix of garage rock, post punk and indie pop. Members of The Wednesday Knights, Cherubs (UK) and Romskip.

ALSO ON BACK TO BEAT RECORDS

The Wednesday Knights – S/T (10")
Übertøs – We Do Eat Lions (LP)
The Frantic Five – La Fin (10")
Hotel Hotel – The Kneeling (LP)
The Wednesday Knights – My Problem is You (LP)

Euro distribution through clear-spot.nl and shinybeast.nl
All releases available from soundflat.de
backtobeat.bandcamp.com | backtobeat@gmail.com

BACK TO BEAT RECORDS

ALL OF 2018'S

100SWINDLE – "For Survival Punx" EP (Bater / General Speech)
ALIEN NOSEJOB – "Various Fads and Technological Achievements" LP (Anti Fade)
ANTIMOB – "Σταύρωση" CS (self-released)
ARMS RACE – "The Beast" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
ASOCIAL TERROR FABRICATION / INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL – split LP (Doomed to Extinction)
AUS – LP (Static Age)
AWAKEBUTSTILLINBED – "What People Call Low Self-Esteem Is Really Just Seeing Yourself The Way That Other People See You" LP (Tiny Engines)
BAD BREEDING – "Abandonment" 12" (One Little Indian)
BAD TIMES – "Streets Of Iron" LP (Goner)
BARROWS – "Discord and Society" EP (self-released)
BB AND THE BLIPS – "Shame Job" LP (Thrilling Living)
BETA BLOCKERS – "Stiff Prescription" 12" (Static Shock)
BETA BOYS – "Late Nite Acts" LP (Feel It)
BLACK VIRGIN – ".44 Killer / Feel the Steel" (WYLN)
BLOOD PRESSURE – "Surrounded" 12" (Beach Impediment)
BLOWDRYER – CS (self-released)
BLUES LAWYER – "Guess Work" LP (Emotional Response)
BODY PRESSURE – "U.S. Decay" LP (self-released)
THE BOMBPOPS – "Dear Beer" EP (Fat Wreck)
BRAINOIL – "Singularity to Extinction" LP (Tankcrimes)
BROWN BAGS – "Twenty-Something Mutant Nobodies" LP (SWU)
CARBONAS – "Your Moral Superiors: Singles and Rarities" 2xLP (Goner)
CB RADIO GORGEOUS – "Plays CB Radio Gorgeous" CS (Not Normal)
CHAIN CULT – "Demo 2018" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
CHEAP NASTIES – LP (HoZac)
CHILD MOLESTORS – "(I'm the) Hillside Strangler / Don't Worry Kyoko (Mummy's Only Looking for Her Hand in the Snow)" (Meat House)
CHILD MOLESTORS – "1978 Hound Dog Recordings" 12" (Negative Jazz)
CHILD'S POSE – "Feral" EP (Nervous Energy)
CHRONOPHAGE – "Give Chance a Peace" CS (self-released)
CHRYSANTHEMUM – CS (self-released)
CINZA – "Demo" CS (self-released)
CIVIC – "New Vietnam" 12" / "Those Who No" EP (Anti-Fade)
CLOSER – "All This Will Be" LP (Conditions / Lauren / Middle-Man)
CLOWN SOUNDS – "Preacher Maker" LP (Recess)
COHERENCE – "Of Alternate Spaces" (A-F / Get Better)
COLD MEAT – "Pork Sword Fever" EP (Helta Skelta / Static Shock)
COMET GAIN – "If Not Tomorrow/I Was More of a Mess Then" (Tapete)
CONDOR – "Cassette Single #2" CS (self-released)
CONSTANT MONGREL – "Living In Excellence" LP (Anti-Fade / La Vida Es Un Mus)
COUNTER INTUITS – "Vietnamese Lighter / Edge" (Total Punk)
CREMALLERAS – "Mercado Negro" 12" (Thrilling Living)
CRISIS ACTORS – CS (self-released)
CRUELSTER – "Riot Boys" LP (Lumpy)
CRUSADE – "Stay Free" LP (Japankore)
CULT LEADER – "A Patient Man" LP (Deathwish)
D.I.N.A. – "Demo" CS (self-released)
D7Y – "Demo" CS (PBP)
THE DARK – "Demons" EP (Darker)
DARK THOUGHTS – "At Work" LP (Drunken Sailor / Stupid Bag)
DAUÐYFLIN – "Dauþiflin" EP (Iron Lung)
DAVID NANCE GROUP – "Peaced and Slightly Pulverized" LP (Trouble In Mind)
DEADLOCK – "Repetition" EP (Painkiller)
DESTROY BOYS – "Make Room" CD (Uncool)
DIE GROUP – LP (Sex Tape)
DRINKS – "Hippo Lite" LP (Drag City)
DRUJ – "Absolute Chaos" CS (self-released)
DYING FOR IT – "Born To Deny" 10" (Safe Inside)
ELECTRIC CHAIR – "Public Apology" EP (Stucco)
ETERAZ – "Evil Hardcore" CS (self-released)
EXECUTE – Vol.1–3 LPs (Bootleg)
EXEK – "Ahead Of Two Thoughts" LP (W.25th)
EXTENDED HELL – "Call of the Void" EP (Desolate)
FALSE RITUAL – "Numb" EP (Doomsday)
FEROCIOUS X – "Den Grå Sanningen" CS (FX Tapes)
FIRESTARTER – LP (Secret Mission)
FIRESTARTER – "Livin' On The Heat" LP(Secret Mission)
FLOWER – "Violent Crusades" CS (self-released)
FORRA – "Mostrame Lo Peor" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
FUCKED AND BOUND – "Suffrage" LP (Atomic Action / Void Assault)
GAZ – CS (self-released)
GEN POP – "II" EP (Feel It)
GOUGE AWAY – "Burnt Sugar" (Deathwish Inc)
HABAK – "Un Minuto de Obscuridad No Nos Volverá Ciegos" CS (self-released)
HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS – LP (Toxic State)
HEADSPLITTERS – "Tomorrow" EP (self-released)
HIDE – "Castration Anxiety" LP (Dais)
HIRS COLLECTIVE – "Friends. Lovers. Favorites." LP (Get Better / SRA)
HOLOGRAM – "Build Yourself Up So Many Times Only To Be Brought Down Again And Again" EP (Hysteria / La Vida Es Un Mus)
HORROR VACUI – "New Wave of Fear" LP (Sabotage)
HUMAN BRAIN REPLACEMENT – "Demo" CS (self-released)
IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO – LP (Static Shock)
IRON CAGES – "Indulgence" EP (Hog Wild / Society Bleeds)
JEFFREY EVANS & ROSS JOHNSON – "Caldonia / Cotton Fields" (Spacecase)
KHIIS – "Saboor" EP (Distort Reality)
KITTEN FOREVER – "Semi-Permanent" LP (Rat Queen)
KORKKIVIKA – "Vituttaa Jo Nyt" EP (Roku)
KRIMEWATCH – LP (Lockin' Out)
LANDLINE – LP (Digital Regress)
THE LAST GANG – "Keep Them Counting" LP (Fat Wreck)
THE LAVENDER FLU – "Mow the Glass" LP (In the Red)
LIÉ – "Hounds" LP (Monofonus Press)
LIFELESS DARK – "Who Will Be the Victims?" CS (self-released)
LILAC – "Barbed Wire Entanglement / On a Wheel" (25 Diamonds)
LITHICS – "Mating Surfaces" LP (Kill Rock Stars)
LONG HOTS – "Monday Night Raw" CS (self-released)
LUCTA – "Black Magic Punk" digital (Occult Punk Gang)
MARBLED EYE – "Leisure" LP (Digital Regress)
MATERIAL SUPPORT – "Terror Prone Nation" CS (Aklasan Records)
MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Greedy Little Thing / Turf War" (Goodbye Boozy)
MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Let Me Do What I Want / Faded Pictures" (Bachelor)
MISS LADY – CS (Fish)

GREATEST HITS:

THE MODS – "Reactions" LP (Ugly Pop)
MONSTER SQUAD – "Depression" LP (Pirates Press)
MUSIC CITY – "Pretty Feelings / Do I" (Static Shock)
MUZZY – "Arby Creep" EP (Goodbye Boozy)
MYSTERY GIRL – "Wild & Mean" EP (Feral Kid)
THE NATIVE CATS – "John Sharp Toro" LP (RIP Society)
NEGATIV – "Projections" LP (Byllepest / Ruin Nation / Sabotage)
NEGATIVE SCANNER – "Nose Picker" LP (Trouble in Mind)
NO LOVE – "Choke On It" LP (Sorry State)
NO RIGHT – "Unjustified" CS (Bitter Melody)
NO TREND – "Teen Love" EP (Digital Regress)
NO TREND – "You Deserve Your Life" LP (Digital Regress)
THE NUMBER ONES – "Another Side of the Number Ones" EP (Sorry State / Static Shock)
OND TRO – "Støv" LP (Travesty Music)
P.O.S. – "S.O.P." EP (Goodbye Boozy)
PARSNIP – "Feeling Small / Winter" (Anti Fade)
PATOIS COUNSELORS – "Proper Release" LP (ever/never)
PERIOD BOMB / BLEEDERS – "Blood Spill" split CS (Crass Lips)
PERSONALITY CULT – LP (Drunken Sailor)
PERVERTS AGAIN – "Friday Night Light" LP (Total Punk)
PHYSIQUE – "Punk Life Is Shit" 12" (Iron Lung)
PIG DNA – "Strong Throat" EP (Square One Again)
PIÑÉN – "Todo Está Corrompido" CS (self-released)
PLASTIC EP & THE RECORDS – "Best Of" EP / "Well You Want To Make A Record" EP (Xerox Music)
PMS – "Cocaine Cunt" EP (Danger)
PORVENIR OSCURO – "Noche De Maldad" EP (Always Restrictions)
PREDATOR – "No Face / White Plague" (Total Punk)
PRIMO! – "Primo Amici" LP (Upset! The Rhythm)
PROJECT GBG – "4 Trak Demo" CS (Black Konflik)
PROVOKE – "Here First / Get Out" demo (self-released)
PUBLIC ACID – "Easy Weapons" LP (self-released)
PURPUR SPYTT – "Nitpick" EP (Kakakids / 1000 Balles / Pouet Schallplaten / Les Syndicats des Scorpions)
Q – "Second" EP (Lumpy)
RATA NEGRA – "Justicia Cósmica" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
RAT CAGE – "Blood on Your Boots" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
RAYS – "You Can Get There From Here" LP (Trouble in Mind)
THE REAL KIDS – "November 1974 Demos / Spring 1977 Demos" LP (Crypt)
REX MANNING DAY – "rexmanningday." LP (Get Better)
RICKY HELL AND THE VOIDBOYS – LP (Greenway / Quality Time)
RIK AND THE PIGS – "A Child's Gator" LP (Total Punk)
RIXE – "Cassette Demo" CS (La Vida Es Un Mus)
ROD OF CORRECTION – "Lies" 12" (Indecision)
RUBBLE – "We Will All Pay The Price For Their Insanity" LP (Distort Reality)
RULER – "Jeanie Jeanie Jeanie / (It's Not) Saturday Night" (Mangrove / Secret Mission)
RULER – "Tiger / Gimme Some Noise" (Mangrove / Secret Mission)
RUNT – "Positions of Power" LP (La Vida es un Mus)
S.H.I.T. – "What Do You Stand For?" LP (Iron Lung / La Vida Es Un Mus)
SALIVA TRIBE – "Brown Napalm" CS (Aklasan)
SBSM – "Leave Your Body" EP (Thrilling Living)
SCHOOL DAMAGE – "A to X" LP (Chapter Music)
SCIENCE MAN – CS (More Power Tapes)
SCREAMING FEMALES – "All At Once" LP (Don Giovanni)
SCYTHE – "Rigor Mortis" EP (Huayno Amargo / Sin Temores)
SECT MARK – "Worship" LP (Iron Lung)
SHAME – "Songs of Praise" LP (Dead Oceans)
SHARKMUFFIN – "Liz Taylor / Your Stupid Life" EP (Little Dickman)
SHIFTERS – "Have A Cunning Plan" LP (Trouble in Mind)
SHIFTERS – "Just Sat Down" EP (Digital Regress)
SIAL – "Binasa" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
SIC – "High Voltage and Uncontrolled" LP (Belgian Waffles)
SIMPLY SAUCER – "She's A Dog / I Can Change My Mind" (Schizophrenic)
SKATING POLLY – "The Make It All Show" (El Camino)
SKULL CULT – "Skeleton Mind" EP (Goodbye Boozy)
SLOW BLOOM – "Hex Hex Hex" LP (No Sleep)
SNOB – LP (La Vida es un Mus)
SOGA – CS (self-released)
SOUL GLO – "Tour Tape 2K18 (For the Homie)" CS (self-released)
SPECIAL INTEREST – "Spiraling" LP (Raw Sugar)
SPEEDY ORTIZ – "Twerp Verse" (Carpark)
SUBDUED – "Open Grave" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus Records)
SUCK LORDS – "New Lords Music" EP (Stucco)
SYNTAX – "Cis Nightmare Still Continues" CS (Vex)
TABLE SUGAR – "Collected Acknowledgements" LP (Stucco)
TEENAGE DEPRESSION – "Skank Or Die" EP (ReRun)
TEMPLE OF ANGELS – CS (Sarcophagus Club)
TEMPLE OF ANGELS – "Foiled" CS (self-released)
TENSIÓN 73 – "Desesperación" CS (Navaja / Orate Asusta A Turistas Con Motosierra)
TERRORIST – "American Today" EP (Toxic State)
TERRY – "I'm Terry" LP (Upset! The Rhythm)
THERAPY – "Demo 2018" CS (self-released)
THE TITS – flexi (T.T.)
THICK – "Would You Rather?" EP
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TOZCOS – "Sueños Deceptivos" LP (Verdugo Discos)
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UBIK – "Sleep" EP (Symphony Of Destruction)
VACATION – "Mouth Sounds #2699" LP (Let's Pretend)
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VILE GASH – "Nightmare In A Damaged Brain" LP (Youth Attack)
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WARTHOG – "Corroded" EP (Toxic State) ii
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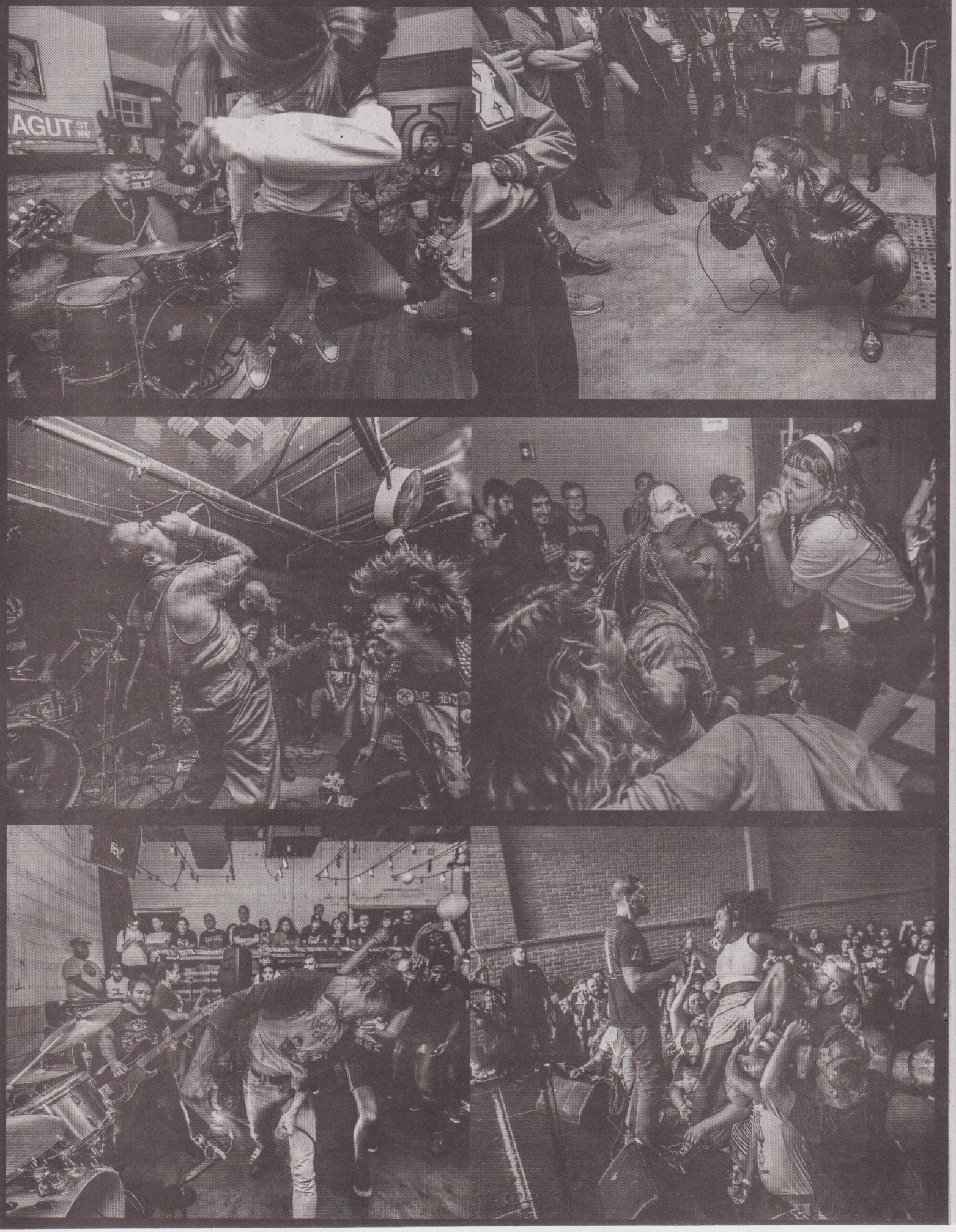
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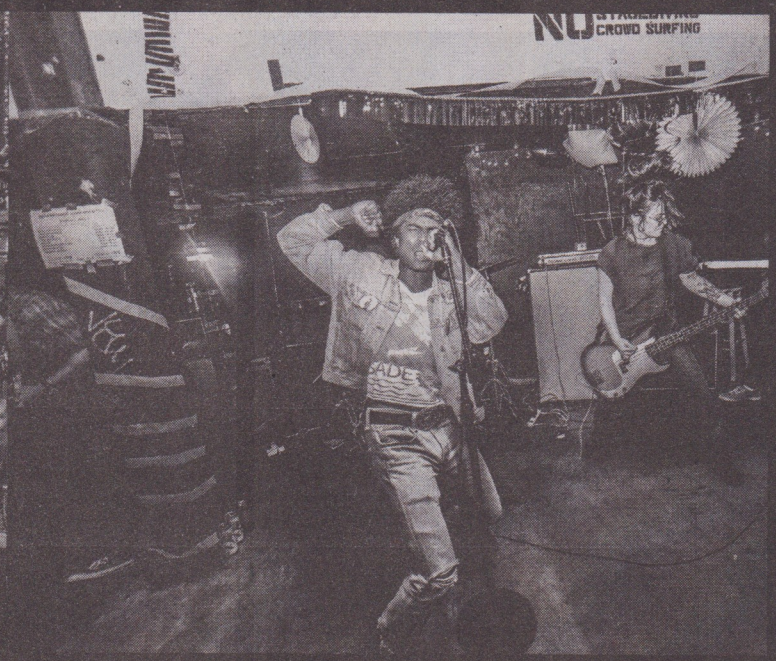


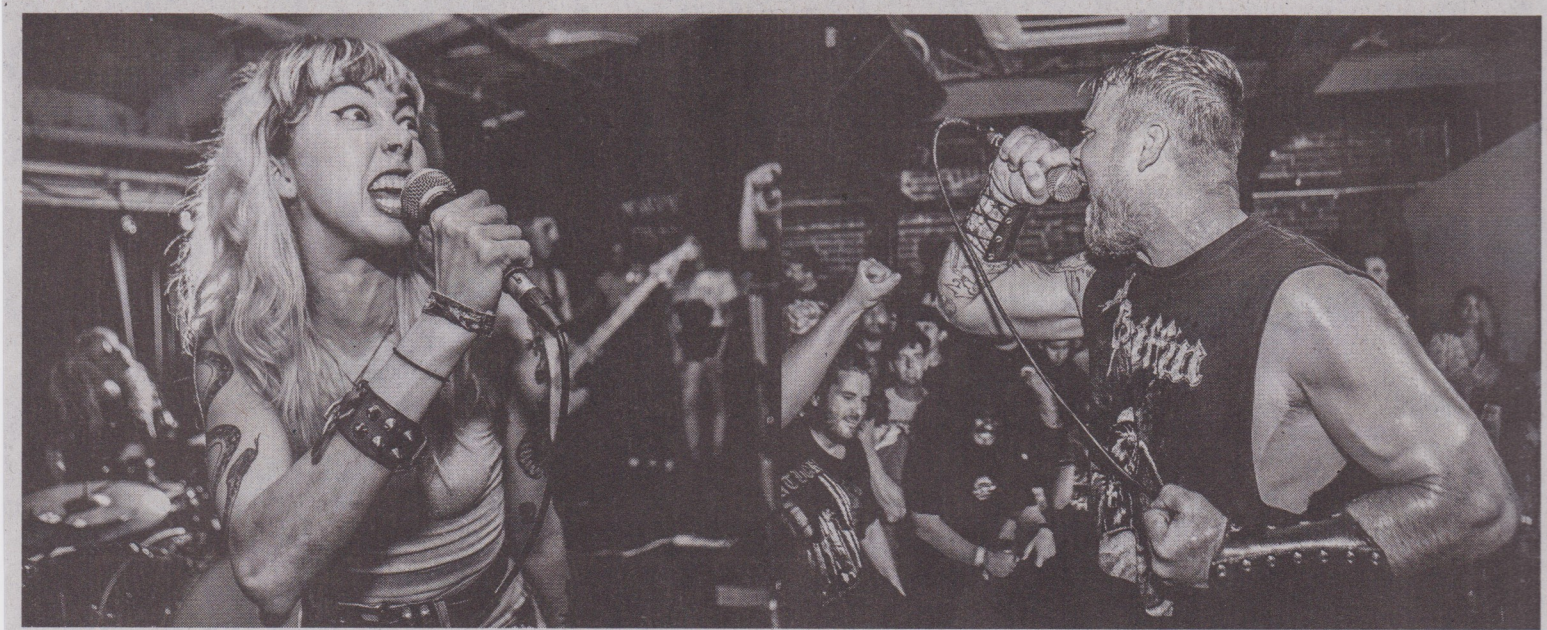
FARRAH SKEIKY

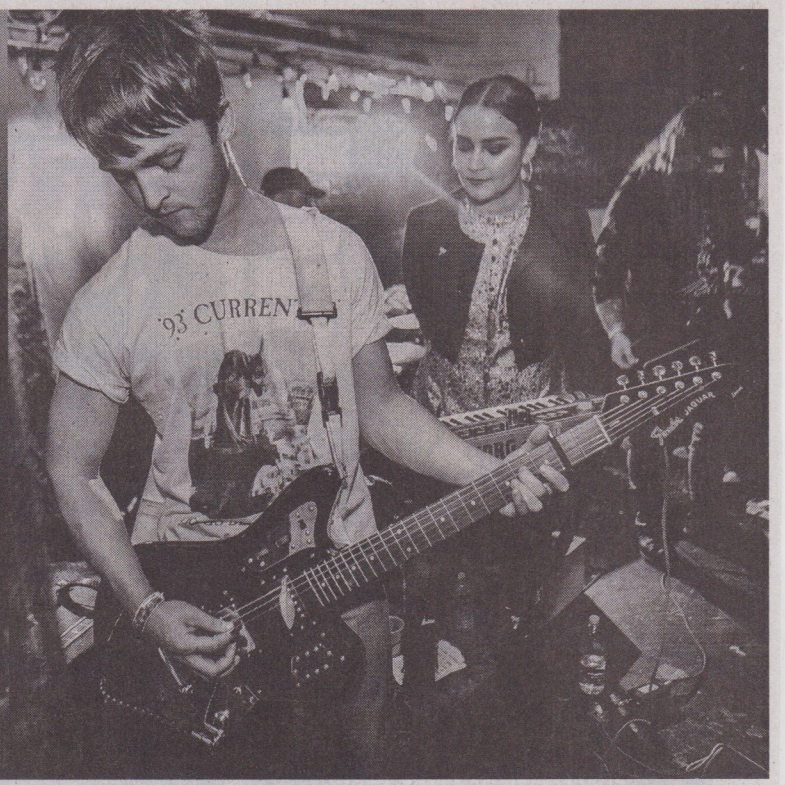
TOP TEN PHOTOS OF 2018

LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM

LEFT PAGE: INITIATE, BODY PRESSURE, LOTION, GOUGE AWAY, IMPALERS, PAINT IT BLACK

RIGHT PAGE: REGIONAL JUSTICE CENTER, TRUTH CULT, PRIESTS, RED DEATH





ANGELA OWENS

TOP TEN PHOTOS OF 2018

LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM

LEFT PAGE: KRIMEWATCH, RAZORBUMPS, EXOTICA, IRON AGE, SUBSPACE, ARMS RACE

RIGHT PAGE: HARAM, TEMPLE OF ANGELS, SIAL, THE FLEX

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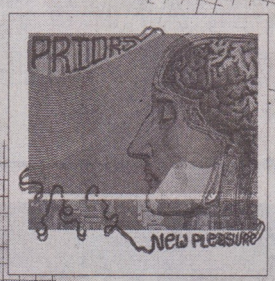

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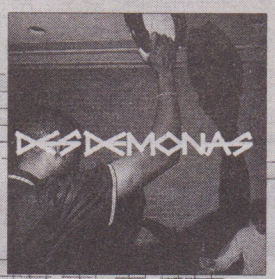

DES DEMONAS
BAY OF PIGS EP

LOSIN STREAKS
THIS BAND WILL SELF-DESTRUCT IN T-MINUS LP

GINO AND THE GOONS
SHE WAS CRUSHED EP

DESAHUCIADOS
LP

LES LULLIES
LP

YOUNG SKULLS
BOMB TRAIN BLUES EP

Austin, with its claim to being the "live music capital of the world," has more shitty, pandering, uninspiring, and spiritually harmful rock bands than could be supported by many thousands of earth-like planets. You'd think the city to be clean judging by the relative dearth of discarded tissue and medical waste in the streets, but in truth it is the most polluted capital in the world—polluted by that thing AC/DC took such pains to warn us about: rock'n'roll noise pollution. But this isn't the neat sounding cyberpunk acid rain pollution Mötley Crüe might invoke; these Austin dodoheads invoke a pollution more like a seeping heartfelt septic tank that creeps in slowly until you're standing in your own shit, as you realize that living in the most progressive city in Texas ain't not worth more than a fly's dickhole. Damak is the Ubik Spray that makes septic sorrows simply vanish: their music is tuneful and raw superpunk which I, along with many discerning folk in this city we find ourselves in, hold in great esteem as one of the most classic and rare bands around. I interviewed Scotty (bass), Dexter (drumbs), and John (git / vox) to learn more about their personal histories and the exciting future of the band. The new recordings have since been posted at damakdamak.bandcamp.com, and expect tapes from Aklasan Records in the near future.

Interview, introduction, and photos by Parker Allen.

SCOTTY

Scotty: I grew up in the Chicago suburbs and lived in Chicago for six years before I moved here.

MRR: Were you playing music in Chicago?
Scotty: Yeah, I played in this powerviolence band called Georgia O'Queef, and a few other things that never took off. I was in a hardcore band in high school, Shockfraught.

MRR: Was that your first band?
Scotty: Yeah, yeah, first real band that played shows and shit. It was super '80s hardcore, me and my buddies listened to the Preschool record by Gang Green and Black Flag and all that shit. And I did like a project with some friends before that and we covered the Virus and shit. But that band didn't—we played the middle school talent contest, that was the one time we ever played.

MRR: Did you win?
Scotty: Uh, no.

MRR: So was Fancy your first band after moving to Austin?
Scotty: Yeah, we started a different band called No Force, but never did anything with that really, then we got Josh and Marky and started Fancy.

[Fancy is a great hardcore punk band in Austin, with a new series of songs called 'Pinkies Out' which can be heard at fancyaf.bandcamp.com]

MRR: How long ago was that, then?
Scotty: We kinda started around the same time as Damak, that bridge show [with Control Test] was Damak and Fancy's first show. That was my first show living in Austin.

MRR: So that means Damak's been a band for about a year and a half. And you did a tour a year ago, right?
Scotty: Yeah. Last December we did like a Midwest thing, that's the only time we've gone out of state. We've done the Valley and Houston also.

DEXTER

MRR: So Scotty and I were talking about musical history and how it came to be that you're all playing music now...
Dexter: It's pretty fuckin' weird to be honest, cuz I didn't come from the punk scene or anything like that. I grew up being into metal and stuff like that, but at some point in high school I stumbled upon the scenester shit and I was like a part of that, whenever that shit was really poppin' and—goofy as it is, I was in a Christian metalcore band in high school. Super goofy. But I was able to build up my chops, guitar-wise especially.

MRR: So did you continue with the Christian metalcore band after high school?
Dexter: I did for like the year after that. Before that I had a pop punk band in middle school with my brother and my cousin and like—we were into Green Day and shit like that. And I mean, we played two gigs, like at a talent show and some pool party. *[laughter]* That was cool, but I was getting more into thrash, I was super into Pantera and Slayer and Suicidal Tendencies, but then I met friends in high school who turned me onto the emo stuff and I thought, well, it's not as bad as I thought.

MRR: Was the high school band popular?
Dexter: Eh, not so much. I'm still proud of

the songs we wrote. And then I had another short-lived pop punk band, and then in 2011 I joined a buddy of mine in another emo band, but not metalcore, not screamo, more like Early November kind of shit. And I still play in that band actually, it's called the Writing Season, and I play guitar in that. So that's cool that I get to play some light stuff for a change. But as far as Damak, I went to college in Lubbock, and Writing Season would play like every winter break, every summer break. Then I moved here after I finished up with school and tried to pursue filmmaking, but after a year or two I realized that's not really my thing, like I'm more into music and artwork and stuff. Then I went to the first This As Austin fest, and I knew John from back in the day cuz he was also somewhat involved in the scenester stuff at the same time as me, and I ran into him there, and about a year later he asked me "hey, you wanna play drums in Damak?" and I was like "fuck yeah." It was the first band I'd ever drummed for and somehow I was able to get a kit for 200 bucks cuz John knew someone that was selling it—it was the Hatred Surge drum kit. So then Damak started, and from there Ninth Circle started *[punk metal band that all three members of Damak are in, ninthcircle1.bandcamp.com]*. But it was all from running into John, cuz otherwise I don't know if I would have been able to meet people, cuz I didn't know fuckin' anybody, he was my "in" for meeting everyone here. So it's worked out.

JOHN

MRR: Dexter was saying how you were involved in the metalcore scene in high school, and that's how he met you—
John: I originally met Dexter through the McAllen VFW scene. At the time, there were a lot of metalcore bands playing mixed-bill shows with beatdown hardcore bands and metal bands. One of my buddies in my sophomore year of high school invited me to one of these mixed bill shows, and upon arrival I knew that I wanted to be a part of this thing. All of it was overwhelming as I walked into the VFW hall and witnessed kids hardcore dancing and the crowd killing each other. Before that, my only exposure to hardcore dancing was through the "Sing the Sorrow" music video. I eventually met Dexter when I saw one of his old bands play. I originally was curious about the local punk scene, but none of the kids at my school went to those shows, I didn't find out about the Mcallen punk scene until later on. Those shows were my foray into eventually playing in bands.

MRR: What band were you in at that time?
John: I was in a band called Sharktooth, which was like a hardcore band with powerviolence parts. So it'd be like a quick blast part *[beats on table]*, and then like a hardcore thing—

INTERRUPTION by local music lover Colton King: "I go to Olympia on Tuesday, and I'll be there for like two weeks..." It's been two weeks, Colton—time to come back!

John: —I wanted to start a punk band, but nobody wanted to do it. I wanted to start just like a really jangly pop band, but nobody wanted to do it either. It wasn't until I started this band in 2014 called Ingrate, and that was lie a straightforward punk band and I was like, "OK, I've finally found individuals that want to play this kind of stuff." It was just people I hadn't met before that were already into it, and so I got to play guitar in a band for the first time. What I was really into as a kid was like Krarftwerk and Devo, and I wanted to start a punk band that had at least one synth, so I started this band Digi-boys. And actually the demo, overnight—it didn't blow up, but a lot of people were listening to it. And we were like "what the fuck?" We recorded that demo with a handheld digital recorder and we individually recorded—we would set it up somewhere and tell the drummer to play the song from memory, and then we would overdub each part.

MRR: Is that how you recorded the Damak stuff?
John: That's after I got an audio interface. That was like a bedroom project, cuz Digi-boys ended pretty abruptly, so I had riffs left over,

and I just asked a buddy to record drums and sang over it myself. All my bands seem to end pretty abruptly.

MRR: How is Damak doing right now? Is there a future?
John: Mm, I feel like I'll keep recording under it at least, and I'm gonna experiment more with other influences I have. We actually recorded last week, and musically it's a little different now. It's a lot cleaner, jangly, which is what I like.

MRR: More pop?
John: I wish. But I wanna tone it down even more later on. I don't want it to just be a punk band forever.

MRR: So what are you doing with the recordings?
John: We're gonna put it out on this label called Aklasan, it's a San Francisco label and I hit them up originally cuz their whole thing is like "Filipino-American punks," so I hit them up originally to see if they would just carry our tape in the distro, and then it eventually led to "do you want to release something?" And in August of 2019 he invited us to play their fest. So we're gonna do that, we're gonna do like a California thing.

MRR: You told me once about how one of your songs is about your lunchbox when you were a kid—how you were made fun of for having different food. Do a lot of your lyrics focus on identity?
John: Yeah, on the identity issue, just being a first-gen immigrant. I was born in the Philippines.

MRR: It's crazy your parents ended up in South Texas.
John: Yeah. In New York, my dad was wondering where we should move to next. Cuz they were recruiting nurses in Las Vegas and South Texas. And the cost of living in South Texas was way cheaper, and they were gonna pay an incentive. So my dad chose South Texas of all places, and I grew up in McAllen. I would think about like, how would my life have been had I lived in Las Vegas, or stayed in New York? I was thinking about that recently.

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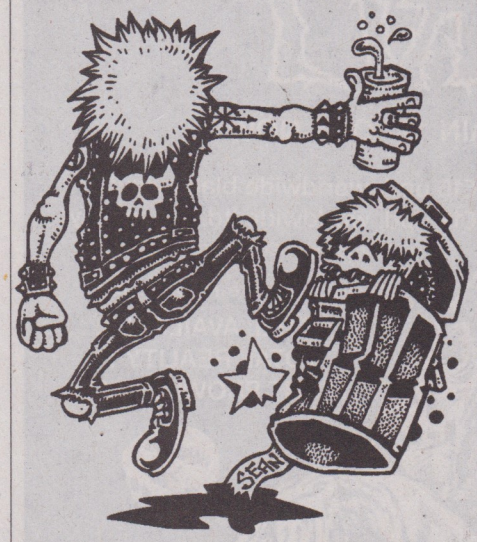

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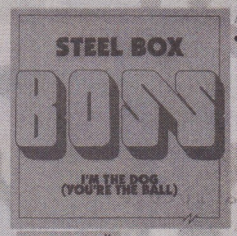

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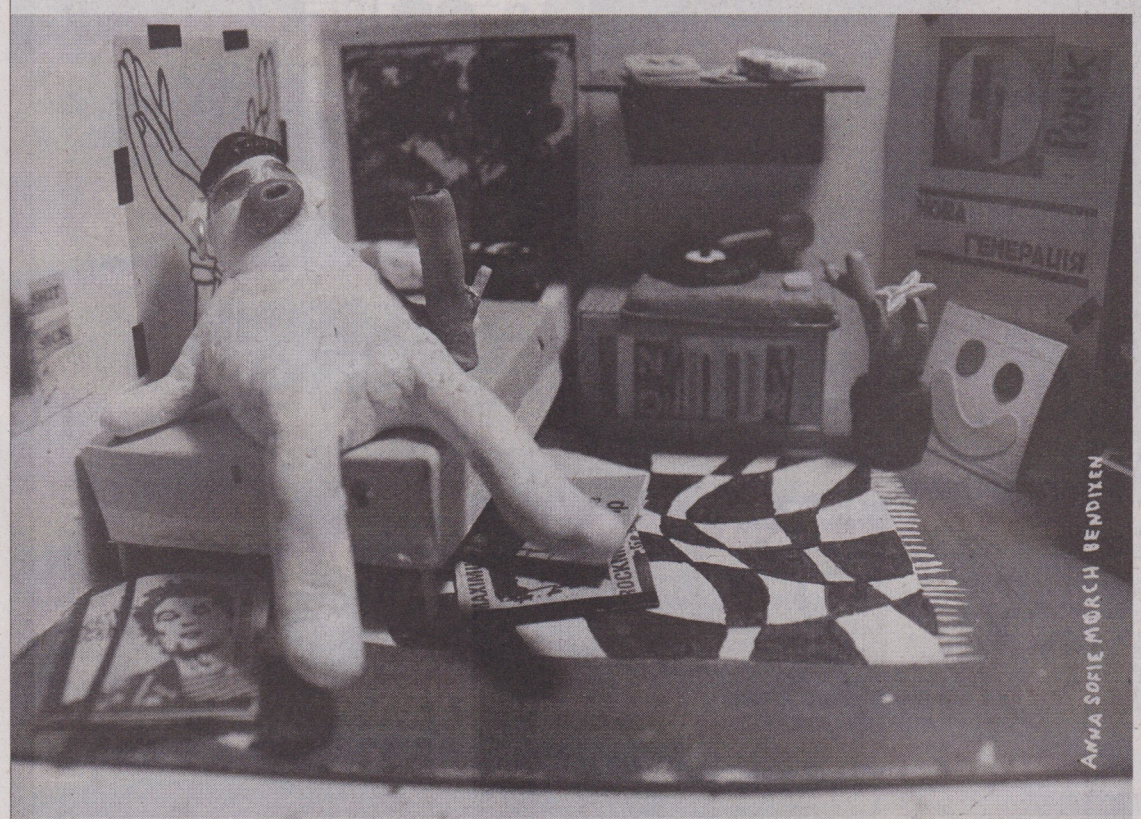

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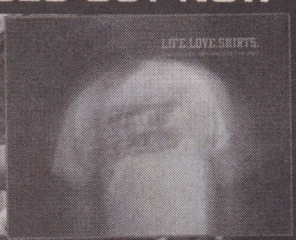

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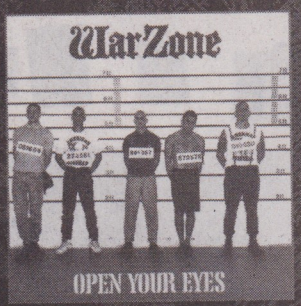

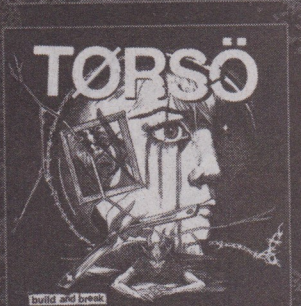

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CONSTANT MONGREL

Sam Eckhart sat down with the band, on a pleasant spring afternoon out the back of punk record store Lulu's to talk about the band's new record and the importance of "lifestyle."

Introduction by Nick Warnock.

Interview by Sam Eckhart

Constant Mongrel are one of countless bands to come out of the 21st Century post-UV Race Australian revival of Do It Yourself music activity. While many lesser bands' sounds or identities are carved in stone within minutes of their inception, the Constant Mongrel has gathered momentum over the last nine years, a snowball effect where the group has built upon itself, engulfing new members along the way. This rolling stone has gathered moss and now has many layers. Over their previous two LPs they have ushered in their on-the-border-of-punk-&-post-punk sound you could sell to open eared listener with comparisons to Wire or Alternative TV. But Constant Mongrel's strength isn't as curators of good taste or pushers of musical boundaries, it's in personality! Their latest effort, Living In Excellence (released by La Vida Es Un Mus and Antifade), is their most collective effort yet, where the unique qualities and rich character of each member have formed something greater than the sum of its parts, or musical descriptions. Constant Mongrel is a world in itself.

MRR: It's been three years since the DCM single, five since your last album, Heavy Breathing—what's been happening in that time?
Tom: Well, we've been playing a bit here and there.
Amy: We had one whole year off because Tom moved to Darwin; that was a year, wasn't it?
Tom: That was a full year. That would have been right when we released the DCM 7", I think.
Amy: Yeah, you flew back for a few shows and stuff, but we put the actual writing on hold, I guess.
Hugh: We sort of had some momentum going, then Tom moved to Darwin, which is as far north of Australia as you can go, very tropical climate, pretty challenging place to live. Anyway, there was that, and we also just had other bands we were doing to keep us occupied. Andrew started a new band called Pappy, Amy had Terry, I was doing stuff with Nun. So it wasn't as much of a priority to keep it going.
Amy: Life got in the way! But it's not like we thought the band was gonna stop or anything, it was just on hold for a little while. And then when Tom moved back we just started playing again.
Tom: I think that's the thing with the band; we've never really been serious in that sense. It's more of a life band—does that make sense? It fits into our lives, as opposed to "we're doing this, and we're going on tour, we're releasing a record." It just happens.

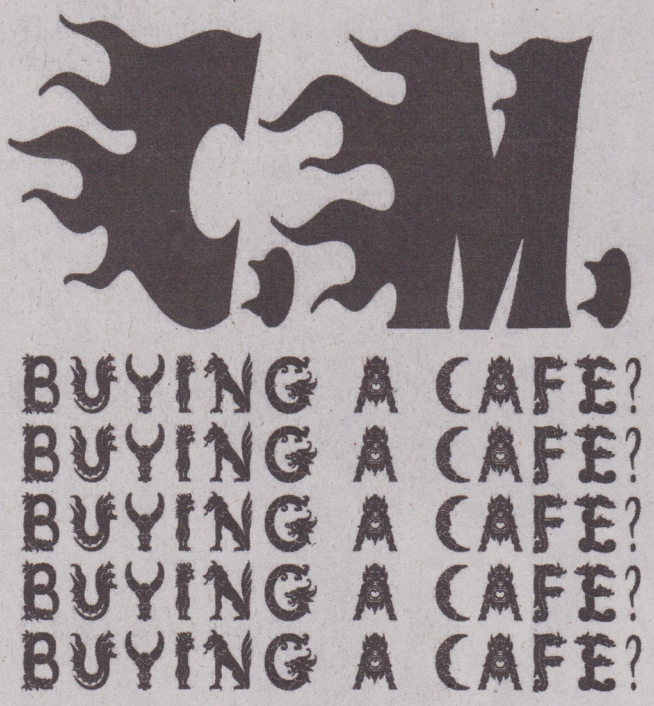
MRR: What do you guys do for day jobs?
Tom: I run a cafe. It's a demanding job but has become a little more easy going recently.
Amy: Currently I'm unemployed after working eight years in a paint shop.
Andrew: I just started a PhD in Australian architectural history.
Hugh: I work in building maintenance at a university. It's the best job I've ever had.

MRR: So the songs that are on the record, were they written after Tom got back from Darwin, or had they been kicking around for a while?
Andrew: I think at least a few were around. Songs like "2x4" we've been playing for ages. Since around the DCM 7" time.
Hugh: But we wrote something like, three quarters of the record for the recording, and one or two I wrote a week before or something like that. I wrote a lot of my lyrics later while travelling around Mexico.
Amy: And then a couple in the studio. *[laughter]*
Andrew: Yeah, two were written on the day of recording, including the song "Living In Excellence."
Hugh: We've always done that. While we're all recording together and playing over a couple of days non-stop, in between someone will come up with a riff and will end up just going, "that sounds good, let's just make a song around that and hit record. If it's good we'll keep it, if not... just throw it in the garbage of many average songs."

MRR: In regards to the new album, and correct me if I'm wrong because it could just be my reading, but compared to the last few, the lyrics especially feel more politically charged. Or they're at least more upfront about it. What was the motivation for that shift, if there was one?
Tom: All the lyrics for Constant Mongrel, they've progressed from being kind of novelty to focusing on simple domestic things, and then now this one has sort of moved from that into the political realm. Or, not so much the political realm but maybe more social commentary on a whole, instead of being more personal. It wasn't really intended; "600 Pounds," the first song on the record—that song definitely has political words in it. But I don't think people really know what it means. They hear a few words or phrases and they get an idea, so all of a sudden they're like "they're talking about politics in the world now." But that's actually a domestic song about living...
Amy: So much lifestyle on this LP. *[laughter]*
Tom: It is actually a lifestyle thing! It's like, we're living in a world... the song on a whole, I might as well just go into it. The song on the whole is actually about the character in the song buying a painting by Adolf Hitler, because the world is straying into the right-wing, fascist side of things. So it's like an investment piece. He's like this morally corrupt character that's like "I don't care. I'm running out of work, the world's going to shit. I'm gonna buy this painting for 600 pounds because it might soon be worth 6,000."
Hugh: He's treating it like BitCoin.
Tom: Yeah, exactly.
Hugh: "Lifeless Crisis" is about the tediousness of depression and feeling down, sort of taking the mickey out of myself and my own average existence. "Birch" is about my distaste for certain Western religions. "Earnest" explores the horrible feeling of being around the oppressive masculine misogyny in Australia, especially as a female. "Downhill" is just about going on a date with my girlfriend in Tokyo. So yeah, a lot of it's a reflection of our own lives and how we understand or interpret what's around us. I find it hard to ignore a lot of the dark fucked up things about our country, especially just people's values and the whole racism thing. It's difficult to ignore, so that definitely comes through, but I hope the cheek in tongue humor does as well.

MRR: That's interesting because the band, to me at least, has always felt like it had this edge of weird, almost absurdist humor to it. I see it reflected in things like the "Constant Mongrel—Opening A Cafe" t-shirt or with most of Vinci's art (especially on the new album), even the name itself is almost a bit of a piss take. The jokes always tend to have this almost Kaufman-like approach to them, where I'm not even sure if I fully understand what the joke is. Is this something that's been an intentional element of the band from the beginning, or is it just a reflection of your personalities?
Hugh: I think it's just a reflection of our personalities. There's still jokes that even I don't get within a lot of it. Or at least I think the interpretation is completely open. I get a bit... not frustrated but a bit weirded out when bands are overly serious. I think the best punk bands, even from way back, have always had humor or at least not taken themselves completely seriously. It's meant to be anti-establishment, so it shouldn't be too serious, right? At least that's always been my feeling.
Amy: I just think naturally your sense of humor comes through in things. I don't think any of us are particularly serious people, in general. And I just find it more enjoyable personally if there's humor involved.
Andrew: And if you have a band called Constant Mongrel, you've already set the bar pretty low.
Tom: We set the bar low with the first three years of playing, pretty much with some of the stuff we came up with.
Andrew: You start out with a band called Iceage, you can kind of go a certain direction. With Constant Mongrel, you really can't.

MRR: I didn't know. I still get great glee out of saying to people "you know what the name means right?" I think I'd read about it in an old interview, and I didn't realize what the word meant until I'd read that. So I don't actually know how prevalent of a term it is.
Amy: Because I'm from New Zealand, and I mean, some people in New Zealand might know what that means, but I didn't really. And my Mum was always like "what's that band you're in—the dog band?" and I'm like "Oh God," you know? She still doesn't know what it actually references.
Amy: Yeah, overseas people probably don't know.
Andrew: I didn't know! I was just like, "What a stupid name. Yeah sure, I'll join this band, whatever."



Hugh: Says Mr. Taco Leg
Andrew: Yeah, I mean, hey. But you know I would never equate mongrel with a mongrel, but I guess I do now.
Hugh: I think we're all trying to avoid explaining the name as it's cringe. Basically a mongrel is an Australian term for an erection. "Constant Mongrel" was the discomfort of having one all the time or something. Silly name made up on the spot. Can also be interpreted as constantly aggro / grouchy. Yeah, we've covered the dick joke, let's move on.
Tom: We've tried spelling it wrong or abbreviating it to CM.
Hugh: Yeah, or spelling it wrong to try and throw people off a bit, but it doesn't work. *[laughter]* We're just stuck with that. But I think it goes back to talking about how the band was formed; Andrew and Amy had a similar sense of humor, and James Vinci certainly I think really enjoys working with us because he loves implementing humor in his art work as well, and he's always coming up with stuff that's wild.

MRR: I was going to ask about the LP artwork. James Vinciguerra seems to have done all of your designs. Do you guys give him any direction with any of that?
Amy: We just give him free reign, really.
Hugh: Yeah, we just give him free reign and he comes up with things that I could never ever think of. Completely inconceivable. The first t-shirt he did for us is basically a rip of a Uniform Choice design, but it works so well, and he added his own touches to make it really interesting for such a basic idea.
Tom: Even that "Opening A Cafe" t-shirt, that was all him. It was because I guess he saw that it was absurd that I was starting a café business—that it was really weird. And the whole thing was weird, and it still is after two years.
Hugh: He picks up on some of the humor in our songs or our mannerisms I guess and then spins his own beautifully twisted imagination into something new and interesting every time. He's always ahead of the game.

MRR: Living In Excellence was recorded with local Melbourne producer Tom Hardisty—what was that process like?
Hugh: Well, he's a very good friend of ours, but he's also just really good at recording bands. He's recorded heaps of great stuff like Eastlink, Lakes, Leather Towel, Straightjacket Nation, UV Race, and more. We've done all of our recordings with him.
Tom: Except with Alex McFarlane (Hobbies Galore), we recorded the first LP with him
Andrew: I wasn't on that record, so I—
Hugh: Yeah you were. [laughter] Andrew did vocals, but from across the country when he was still living in Perth. He hadn't joined the band yet

MRR: Wait, you did vocals from across the country?
Andrew: I literally did, on one of those little hand-held recorders. Stood in my bedroom and sang "In the Night" and then I just sent it over mp3. We found out then Tom and I had sung it out of time with each other, so we just kind of slowed my vocal down a little bit to fit it to the music. [laughter] But yeah, with Tom Hardisty, he's also been playing in the band for three or four years now as well—him and Al are essentially in the band. So for Tom it's just like a practice. And then you say "hey should we do a record this year? Yes. Tom? Good, all right."

MRR: On Tom Hardisty and Al Montford being in the band, I know they've been playing with you live for quite a while. The live band does seem to fluctuate—I think I've even seen you as a seven piece at one point. How does that work?
Amy: It's just down to availability. *[laughter]*
Andrew: It's really trying to get six people's calendars to sync up—if it does, good.

MRR: So what was the motivation of getting fresh blood in the band, especially for the live shows?
Tom: I guess we used the synths and stuff on the recordings—especially on the second record. So ever since then we just started doing it that way live just for fun and maybe a fuller sound for bigger shows with good PAs.
Amy: It was always stuff that Hugh had added. And some sax as well. And then it was just the natural progression of getting people who we liked hanging out with just to play on the live versions of songs
Hugh: They also really like playing. Both Al and Tom really enjoy playing, and they'll ask "can I play that show" or whatever. And now they don't need to—they can just play any show they want. If Tom's not busy teaching primary school kids or Al's not busy with Total Control, UV, Straightjacket, Terry, yadda yadda yadda, then they come play.
Tom: It goes back to that lifestyle thing. *[laughter]*
Hugh: It's all about lifestyle.
Tom: It is! For them it's like "hey, I can be in a band, but I'm not really in the band—I don't have to play if I don't feel like it."
Amy: It's ideal, really.
Tom: It's really good.
Andrew: You can just come up, get your two free drink tickets and go home. No gear, no interviews to do.
Tom: Yeah they've got the ultimate lifestyle band they can be a part of... Or not. It's all good.

MRR: What's the most interesting or fun show you've ever played?
Andrew: I think the best show, or the most fun, was our DCM 7" launch. It was in a friend's basement art space. We tried to make it an "event" so organized sparkling wine on arrival and had cheese platters all night. That was good. Once we supported Kurt Vile and fed him peeled grapes. That was a fun night.
Hugh: True punk bourgeois.
Tom: We once supported Wire but their drummer yelled at Amy for adjusting his drum stool. Even though Amy plays bass and didn't touch his stool.
Amy: Wire was interesting as it's not every day that you get abused by

someone older than you. We were excited to play with them and then the singer ends up being a complete arsehole.
Tom: They now have a song with the words "MySpace" and "Facebook" in it, so I guess the joke's on them.
Hugh: I still think Chairs Missing is a great record. After the show I went home, grabbed my copy and crossed out "Chairs" and replaced it with "Stool," drawing a big sad face on the LP.

MRR: You're all in other bands—even more so within the past few years. Has playing in those other bands affected how you approach playing in Constant Mongrel in any way?
Tom: Musically, this is probably the most punk sounding band that any of us are in. I would always sit down and say "this is a Constant Mongrel song." Woollen Kits doesn't really happen anymore, but I used to write for that in a separate mindset. Even lyrically, it's very separate. So I guess there's a tender side with other stuff I might do, but with this stuff there's a little more social commentary—a little more edge. I don't know about you guys.
Andrew: I only know how to make and play one kind of music, so that's all I can do. I can only play one string, I can only use one finger; that's as far as I'll get. So whether it's Taco Leg, Pappy, or Constant Mongrel, it just depends on who's around me at band practice. I'm just working within my limited capacity to try and get over the line.
Tom: I think Taco Leg influenced Constant Mongrel. We would listen to what you were doing and think, "ahh that's really cool." The minimalist but heavy riffs, I always wanted to stray towards that.
Andrew: I'm sure if you played a Taco Leg song with all of us it would just sound like a Constant Mongrel song.
Amy: I've probably just gotten better from playing heaps.
Tom: Practice makes perfect. What about Nun, Hugh? I think if you took some of your Nun songs and played them with Constant Mongrel they would sound like Constant Mongrel songs as well.
Hugh: So to answer your question: yeah, there's some crossover! *[laughter]*
Tom: I guess we're the same people in this band as we are in the other bands. *[laughter]*
Hugh: God, that's such a bad answer.
Andrew: Maybe none of us are particularly complex individuals.

MRR: What's interesting or unique about the Aus music scene currently? Has it changed much since you started playing?
Tom: The Australian music scene is amazing. There are so many genuinely good bands playing at the moment in all different genres. The punk, post-punk, and pop / rock scene is constantly morphing and developing around us in positive ways. For example, I think there has been a big shift (that still has a way to go) in regards to women, the LBGTQI community, and people of color being involved since the time I've been playing. We are also getting older and a new crop is popping up. It's exciting to see them do their thing.
Andrew: I think the Aus music scene is nice, well at least our scene is nice because it is quite tight knit and small in a way. Knowing each other, playing together, going to the same shows is nice. I think this allows you to have a bit more fun and be more relaxed in your approach to music. Not so much interest in "making it" or doing anything more than playing a few shows. It has totally changed since I started playing I think. Very different dynamic, but maybe I am just getting old.
Amy: Didge Raves are pretty unique.

MRR: Favorite local bands currently?
Tom: The Faculty, Parsnip, Orion, Low Life, Nic Warnock / Phone, Del Lumanta.
Amy: J MacFarlane's Mystery Guest, the Snakes.
Andrew: School Damage, Terry, Bed Wettin' Bad Boys.
Hugh: Exhaust World and Deep Red and two new bands to keep an eye on. Oh, and Trevor.

MRR: Were there any records or bands that you were into or listening to at the time that might have influenced the latest LP?
Hugh: Nothing in particular for this one. We kind of let it find its own path a bit with all of us writing different songs. I think the record ended up sounding like more of the lively or animated British post-punk bands like the Fall or Wire or Swell Maps or something, and while we like those bands we weren't listening to a lot of that at the time. I think previously we'd thought about trying out more brash sounding stuff like early Blitz, Conflict, the Mob, etc. Try to get more oomph. Perhaps that was somewhat embedded for Living In Excellence, but this time round we were all just listening to the array of random stuff we all like together and individually.
Tom: I think we were leaning more towards the more post-punk side of things because we had the studio so we could make effect things separately and more defined, less mashed together. So Second Empire Justice was something we were listening to, that Polish synth record Siekiera did, even the first Strokes record for some guitar parts, but a lot of different stuff.
Hugh: Amy and Tom particularly love their country music. Andrew and I bond over Oi! punk, youth crew, and other hardcore nonsense. I'm in my 30s now, so I think I am getting more and more license to delve into jazz stuff without the stigma. That's probably what I was listening to most.

MRR: What's your favourite thing to do as a band other than play? Do you have any traditions?
Hugh: We always enjoy having a meal together. Whether it's before shows or touring. We recently played a show down the Peninsula coast here in Victoria and after the show went to a Rajneesh restaurant with photos of their cult leader Osho all over the walls. Was interesting. Food was really good.
Tom: We have a Constant Mongrel Christmas party each year together with our partners and extended band family. We are about to have one now. We do a Yankee swap and eat pizza. Is Yankee swap a reference to USA Civil War times? Aside from the party, we talk to each other.

MRR: Pick the top three best things about living in Australia?
Tom: 1.) It's very safe 2.) Good food from around the world and Red Rooster 3.) Healthcare is a fundamental right.
Andrew: 1.) Beaches 2.) Architecture 3. Trams.
Amy: Tricky question as Australia is so big and there is quite a difference state to state. 1.) Diverse cultural makeup of the cities 2.) Diverse music / arts scenes 3.) Varied landscapes.

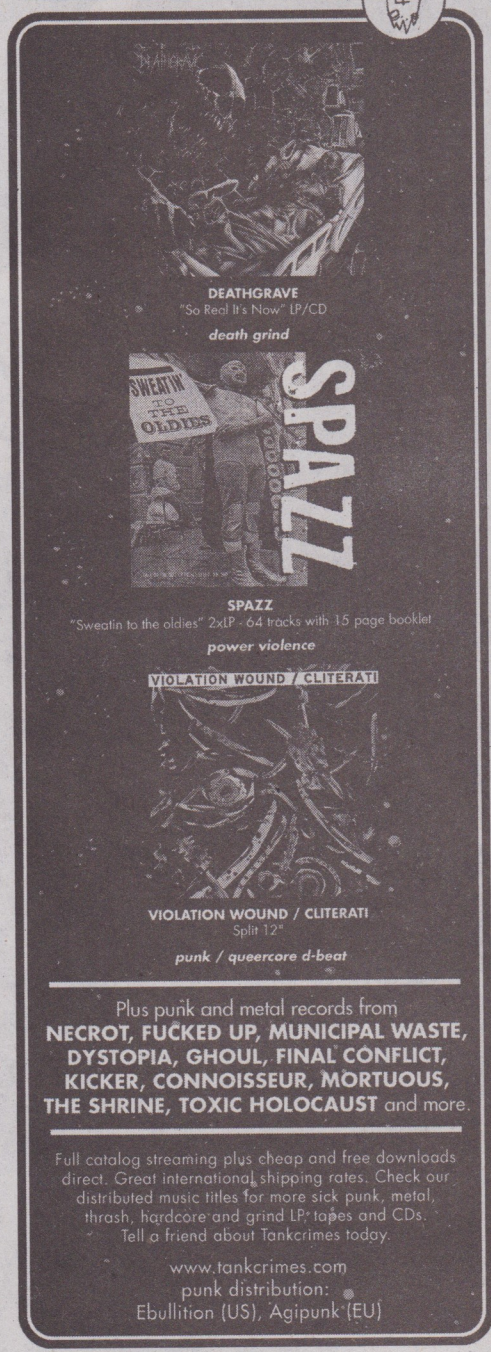
MRR: Three worst things about living in Australia?
Tom: 1.) Veiled and / or blatant racism 2.) The way we treat and have treated the first peoples 3.) Doreen Community Voice (conservative press in general).
Amy: 1.) Scott Morrison and his Liberal Party 2.) Historical injustices 3.) Racism.
Andrew: 1.) Melbourne weather 2.) No Taco Bell in Melbourne. 3.) Melbourne weather.

MRR: What's next for the band? Any plans for next year?
Tom: Maybe look to record a 7" or something soon and potentially a Europe tour and a festival or two.
Amy: Yeah play shows, tour, record.
Hugh: My dream is to tour Japan. Any excuse to get back there.

MRR: Finally, what does Living In Excellence mean?
Hugh: I guess you just put it perfectly. What makes a life truly excellent? I think it can be interpreted a few different ways. The title song's lyrics probably sum it up best. Listen to the song!

C.M.

constantmongrel.bandcamp.com



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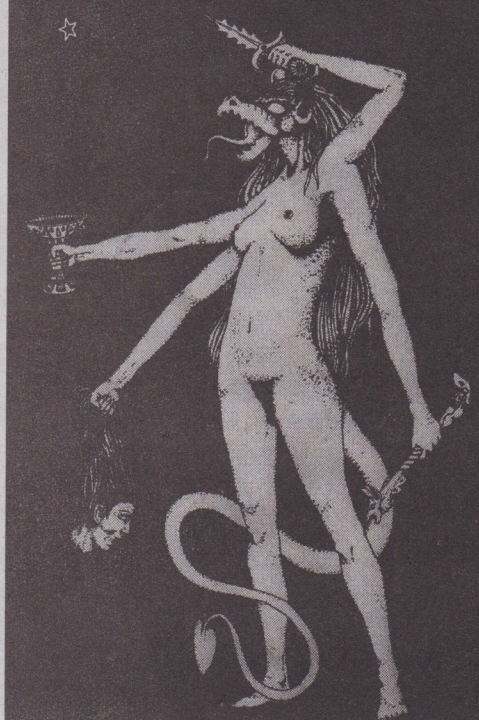

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RUBY KarinTo

Photos by Don Denton or provided by the band.

Ruby Karinto is a four-piece band from Victoria, Canada. As described by the blog Victim of Time, they are "a new band that's got a firm grasp on an old way of thinking but with the freshest reinterpretation...a firm stab into the sketchy world of real quirk, genuine oddness, and forward thinking that many other bands dare not tread."

Our discography includes one self released three-track EP, Popsicles, *which garnered some attention. Reviewers drew musical connections to post-punk, synth pop, and No Wave, as well as highlighting the band's choices of instrumentation, lyrical content and language—bass, drums, keyboards, electronics, and vocals in Japanese and English.*

Fast forward to summer 2018, when we find ourselves adding a second release to our discography—this time a full-length LP on Chicago-based label HoZac Records. Although generally in the same style as the EP, overall the LP demonstrates a fuller use of electronics and keyboards with more songs giving a nod to punk and post-punk songwriting.

As part of this unique interview invitation from MRR, *we asked some of our friends and influences from around the world to pose questions to us. What you are reading is an edited version of our discussions about the LP, importance of connections to DIY and local scenes, how we started, and what influences our sound and songwriting process.*

A special thank you goes out to the following humans for agreeing to participate and contribute:

Lorne Hammond (LH), synth guru and historian, Victoria BC; **Andy Kerr (AK)**, musician (Infamous Scientists, NoMeansNo, Two Pin Din), Victoria BC and Amsterdam; **Paul Wiggin (PW)**, musician (Section 25), UK; **Jose (JT)** from Tremendo Garaje (tremendogaraje.blogspot.com) Spain; **Toshio (TB)** from Base Recordshop, Tokyo, Japan; **Marcin Siehankiewicz (MS)**, music critic, blogger, Poland

Ruby Karinto
is:
Jason Flower (drums); Damon Henry (bass); Ai Ito (vocals, electronics, synth); Soma Morse (electronics, synth, vocals)

MRR (LH): Fill in the blank: I joined this band because...
Damon: Jason and I played in a band called Seatbelt back in '92–'94 in Victoria. Years later we both ended up back in Vic, and Jason romanced me back into jamming again. We started jamming just bass and drums, and though we weren't quite sure what it would become, we were clear from the start that we didn't want any guitar; we wanted to find a way to fill the space differently.
Soma: I had been doing a lot of solo noise and experimental music around the time Jason asked if I would be interested in playing electronics. I remember bringing some of my noise setup to our first

jam—modulation / delay and envelope filter pedals, a Yamaha Portasound keyboard, a looper pedal and a Korg Monotron ribbon synth. Right from the start, I loved the core sound of the drums and bass—the idea that I could add pedal, keyboard, or synthesizer sounds to the project really appealed to me.

Ai: Jason asked me to join, and I said OK.

Jason: When Damon and I were talking about adding a singer, we knew that we wanted a female voice and Ai came to mind right away, even though we knew she had never sung in a band before. It was based purely on style and personality. I knew Ai from hardcore shows back in the early '90s and remembered her blowing me away with some obscure music trivia. We gave Ai a very rough sounding cell phone recording of some song starters. She showed up a week later with full lyrics and completely rocked it. There was no, "we'll talk it over and get back to you..." She was just instantly in the band.

MRR (TB): Which bands influence the Ruby Karinto sound?

Damon: Liquid Liquid, New Order, ESG, Gang of Four, NoMeansNo.

Jason: Siekiera, Purrkur Pillnikk, DAF, Section 25, Grauzone, Stump, the Sugarcubes, the Contortions, Can.

Soma: I draw on a range of influences, from older synth-based movie soundtracks (try Klaus Schultze or Vangelis), to Aussie synth prog like Cybotron and Euro krautrock bands and Amon Duul II, to '80s rock, in particular Greg Hawkes from the Cars, to Devo, and '90s synth worship by acts like Add N to X. I tend to try a bunch of different synth sounds and approaches before deciding on what works.

Ai: I can't think of a band, but my eight-year-old tells me I sound like MIA and she likes Ruby Karinto. I suppose all those psych rock bands I obsessed about in my mid 20s like Dragonfly, Hush Puppies, and early Dead stuff.

MRR (LH): Trying to explain seeing you, I start stringing together odd ideas... I can't think of anyone else like Ruby Karinto—punk without guitars. Most bands conform to some typical style, but you are just you. How did this happen?

Jason: I've always drawn my inspiration from far away, especially isolated places. Music that was hard to find, even hard to hear...Icelandic post-punk, Afrobeat, Turkmen-SSR Jazz...some reference points just to get the feeling, not necessarily duplicate the sound. Damon and I are really locked in when we play, wobbles and all—so we're drawing from an intuitive sense of creating moods.

Damon: Once we started to define our sound a bit, I became pretty clear about the reference points for me as a bass player. I liked the idea of using this specific time period of the late '70s / early '80s as a jumping off point and seeing what would come of it.

Ai: I don't feel like I'm necessarily influenced by any music, but you can also say I am influenced by most music. My inspiration often comes from my childhood memories like books I read, music I listened to, and schoolyard chants or whatever. I don't have any singer I look up to or emulate. As much as it sounds all high and mighty, I'm just me, doing my thing. That's the truth. I was actually talking to my friend about Ruby Karinto and genre, and I decided I'll call our genre "I don't know wave" because I really don't know where we fit in.

Soma: I do think Damon and Jason both had some very specific stylistic directions they wanted to explore as a rhythm section with the band overall. But these directions were never really fully explicit for myself and Ai. It was only later that we took on that descriptive label of No Wave, somewhat reluctantly. The reality is that we each bring our own set musical experiences, and it's the meshing of these experiences that creates our sound–maybe more like a jazz improv group where each player brings a sound and style to the band.

MRR (JT): No Wave, post-punk, art-punk, J-pop, avant-garde, experimental... Too many tags for a band, and probably all of them are right for a group doing the most interesting dance music I have heard in ages. I can't avoid thinking we are in a similar moment to when James Chance took the Contortions' sounds to James White & the Blacks–no brass, but marvellous synths instead. Do you think No Wave needed this jazzy electronic funky update?

Jason: As a musician, I wanted to provoke my comfort zone and force myself to fill space differently. I don't think we set out with the intention of updating a genre. The groups that I would consider our contemporaries are few and far between.

Soma: People are excited to hear music that riffs on No Wave, though. After we started out and were looking for bands to play with locally, I started to realize that other bands are experimenting with elements of No Wave and post-punk and krautrock, not just locally but internationally. Just listen to Crack Cloud or Useless Eaters or Lithics or BEAK>. For me, what makes us different is the lack of guitar, Ai's vocal style, and that the groove is prioritized over and above any proggy or angular style of sound.

MRR (PW): How would you describe the group's creative process?

Ai: I basically see us as a jam band. We usually jam a bit at the beginning of practice, and if something sounds good we'll record it.

Damon: There's definitely no one sitting at home writing songs and bringing them in.

Jason: In the early material, Damon and I had full parts that Soma and Ai would layer on top of. The songs that have come up in the last couple of years are created a bit differently, but it's still easiest if Damon and I get ahead a bit with the groove. Space is important, and to consider all the different combinations of the four people.

Soma: Yeah, these days it's very generative–we isolate a part we all like and work outward from there to build a song.

Ai: I feel like Damon or Jason often start off playing a riff or beat and Soma and Ai layer our synth and / or noise on top. Vocals don't come until the song pattern is somewhat established because I don't work other way around for some reason. It's important for me to feel the rhythm before I come up with a saying or whatever.

MRR (TB): Are you influenced by Japanese bands?

Ai: Growing up in Japan, music was never that big for me, probably because I was pretty young. My biggest childhood music memory is "Lollipop" as both my parents weren't into Japanese music at all. Most of my Japanese influences come from folklore...they're often told in dialects. I draw on the cartoons and childhood stories that I heard as a kid. The most Japanese music I've ever been influenced by is probably the Group Sound genre from the '60s, which was highly influenced by surf rock and British invasion but strangely original. I was then exposed to the hardcore and punk scene when I moved to Canada at fifteen. Just don't compare me to Deerhoof (no offense Deerhoof). I see myself much more aligned Yayoi Kusama because I think of myself as more of a performance artist than musician per se.

Soma: Maybe some facets of Japanese grindcore like the Gerogerigegege, or the spaced / freaked out groove of Omoide Hatoba, Melt Banana or Boredoms. It's not a linear connection though. *[laughter]*

Ai: I'm more interested in knowing how Japanese people react to our music.

Jason: Friction, Stalin, Outo, Sacrifice, Casbah, Gism, Shinki Chen, so many more...

Damon: It's an easy one, but...Boredoms, for sure!

MRR (JT): I find the Japanese language more spastic and dislocated language than English; in genres like post-punk or No Wave, I think Japanese matches perfectly.

Even when Ai sings in English, her cadence gives your sound a brilliant disjointed effect. Can you speak about the use of Japanese in your songs?

Ai: Well, apparently I have a very specific way of speaking, even in Japanese. I know I have a monotone voice where it's often mistaken as sleepy. My voice is monotone to the point where someone accused me of being a robot at work (I work as a psychiatric nurse, so granted the person accusing was not mentally well). I'm not really looking for an effect...it's just the way it comes out. I don't really think of myself as a singer, 'cause I don't really sing. It seems silly to call what I do "singing," and it's certainly not "rapping." It is what it is. I make sound, I guess you can say I'm a "vocalist."

Soma: I love your rhythmic approach to the songs.

Damon: When you first did your fast, rhythmic singing, I think it was in "Zoot Suit," it sounded so good. That was when I went "Oh, this is our sound...we found it." For us, who don't speak Japanese, we get divorced completely from the lyrics and we focus on your voice as an instrument.

Jason: We really encouraged Ai to use both English and Japanese, because she has a unique voice in both languages. Early on, I was just so surprised by her voice and had to step back and say "Wow!" I really felt that we had created something new. Ai's voice completed it.

Ai: Sometimes, I repeat a word, like in "Chikotan." Other times, all I'm saying is Japanese onomatopoeia ,as in "Zelda." "Jugemu" is from very famous story from Japanese art of storytelling called Rakugo, and I'm just saying someone's whole name.

MRR (LH): I saw you cover an obscure Infamous Scientists song (which shared members with NoMeansNo). How important is the local scene to you?

Jason: As a rhythm section, I think Damon and I were hugely influenced by NoMeansNo.

Damon: Massive influence for sure. Growing up in Victoria, being able to see local bands like NoMeansNo (Infamous Scientists were before my time) in all ages venues were very, very formative experiences.

Soma: I met my sweetheart at a NoMeansNo show. A great band with a marked influence in my life! I didn't arrive until the late '80s, but I remember a ton of music happening locally. Basement shows, all-ages shows in halls, you name it. I was in my late teens and inspired–not just because it was a big deal to check out all the bands, but it was then I realized I could be in a band and play my own music.

Damon: I always felt that, for a small city, kind of in the shadow of Vancouver and Seattle, Victoria's scene, particularly in the '80s and '90s was super strong.

Ai: Growing up, in our formative years, I think the underground punk scene in Victoria really helped to form who we are. I know for me, a lot of who I am was definitely discovered through getting to know the Victoria scene and meeting people.

MRR (MS): Does playing covers show a "source code or DNA" or not?

Damon: For us, definitely...the covers that we've chosen tend to be songs that we find interesting to play from bands we are influenced by. In that sense, the covers show our source code like you say...but mainly, the goal for us is to have fun playing a song we love with our style and instrumentation.

Soma: There's always something interesting about playing someone else's music. Like with the Section 25 cover on the LP or the Infamous Scientists cover we have worked on more recently. Much of the structure is already there, which is a totally different challenge than working on our own material because the start point is already defined.

Jason: "Always Now" by Section 25 was a real thrill. At one point I'd wanted to name the group Always Now, so yes, the album it's from (*Key Of Dreams*) is unique and inspirational. We also sound check at gigs by playing Sonic Youth's "The Good and the Bad," and lately at rehearsals we like to jam Anderson .Paak's "Come Down."

MRR (AK): Ruby Karinto is a self-described No Wave band. I loved those original No Wave bands out of New York like Teenage Jesus, DNA, Contortions etc. and their intent to not only break the mold, but smash it into a thousand pieces. How did / does that scene's sound and aesthetic inspire you?

Damon: I definitely have a romanticized notion of New York in the late '70s / early '80s...it was such a great collision of punk, hip hop, jazz, and dance music.

Jason: I don't think we laid any claim to No Wave or any genre until later when we listened back to the repertoire that we had created. It was only afterwards that we realized what mutant we had created. I have the impression that there wasn't ever really a strong No Wave scene, but instead a bunch of anomalous groups with a "no rules" ethos, reacting to the constraints of

an established punk mold. There's been few and far between that have been called or laid claim to the term "No Wave."
Ai: For me, I have had very little knowledge of "No Wave" genre. I know only handful of the bands, like James Chance and the Contortions and other major names from the '80s. I was raised purely listening to oldies and country music, notably the Beach Boys under a father who was really into *American Graffiti* era.

MRR (JT): The principal guide for me is to discover new bands and labels; for me, Chicagoan label HoZac is a worldwide reference label. Do you really think it's important to be supported by a label?
Ai: This really goes back to the DIY situation, because HoZac would've never heard us without us putting out the 7" ourselves. I think being supported by a label is definitely a plus because we can reach a wider audience that we wouldn't otherwise be able to capture. But really, with or without a label, I think we will play because we want to.
Soma: We're doing Ruby Karinto stuff anyways, so to have the support of HoZac in addition is amazing.
Jason: When it came to recording and putting out a record for ourselves, I had hoped that a popular independent label would make an LP for us. HoZac helped Ruby Karinto to reach the audience that deserved to hear us. So yes, although we sound nothing like the label's groups, in my opinion for Ruby Karinto this was the best.
Damon: When HoZac first contacted us, I was pretty excited, for sure...it's a great label. Todd at HoZac has been super supportive and has put out so much great music, both new and archival.

MRR (AK): How important is the DIY ethic to Ruby Karinto and why?
Ai: This goes back to the formative years that we were talking about before. That was the method that we grew up in... if you wanted to make music, book shows, put out records, you did it yourself and that was that. It is about having control over our creativity and means that we work with other people who believe in the community. I feel like DIY gives us the choice to be truly us, making our visions come together without having to answer to anyone else.
Soma: DIY is the glue that connects people as individuals to a larger community.
Jason: As far as DIY goes, it is the only way we can comfortably be creative without compromising our integrity, but what is DIY in 2018? Everything that was a threat or struggle is now a hashtag or has its own blog.
Ai: True, DIY is so much broader than it was twenty years ago. Back in the day, you would find a pen pal through a zine and write that person, wait for a return letter...no one has to go to fucking Kinko's now to photocopy something.
Soma: Unless that is their thing.
Damon: DIY in 2018 could just be the kid in his bedroom releasing music on YouTube, which is pretty fantastic in and of itself, but that is very different from the DIY community that we all grew up with and still draw influence and support from.
Jason: Our listener demographic is very broad in age, gender, and ethnicity, etc. As we're all getting older, it's super cool to experience the reaction of others still finding your music relevant to teens, cool young adults, and even music scene alumni.

Ruby Karinto is currently working on new material. Visit us at:
Bandcamp: rubykarinto.bandcamp.com
Facebook:.facebook.com/RKRUBYKARINTO
Instagram: @rubykarinto

BEOČIN, SERBIA

Underground Disco is an initiative of young people who want to make an alternative center in Beočin, an alternative place that never existed in this town. Beočin is a small city in northern part of Serbia with about 8,000 inhabitants. The work and effort that people put into the Underground Disco is voluntary, and all the money earned is invested in future events, humanitarian purposes, and supporting younger bands and DIY collectives. The Underground Disco Beočin started organizing shows on July 1st of 2017, and since then the collective organized more than 50 gigs, film projections, humanitarian parties, etc. Quickly they put the name of their town on "must play" list of all bands that are traveling through Balkans because of their hospitality, atmosphere and promoting gigs in a way that gigs should be promoted! The collective also started their small cassette label and tour booking agency. UDB organized their shows in the fallout shelter of the cultural center in Beočin. Unfortunately, in the beginning of August this year, they got kicked out by the cultural center and the ruling political party in Beočin for no good reason. Since then they have organized shows in the local football (soccer) stadium, from which they also got banned by the local political party. While we read this, they are still struggling to find a new place in their city.

DISCO IS NOT DEAD!

Everything is written by Petar Boškov (Underground Disco Crew) and Nebojša Ćato (has spent the better half of the past two decades deeply immersed into the Serbian and European underground scene, playing, recording and touring as a drummer in a number of bands such as Red Union, Shoplifters, Bayonets, and Lazarath).

Underground Disco through the Eyes of an Outsider

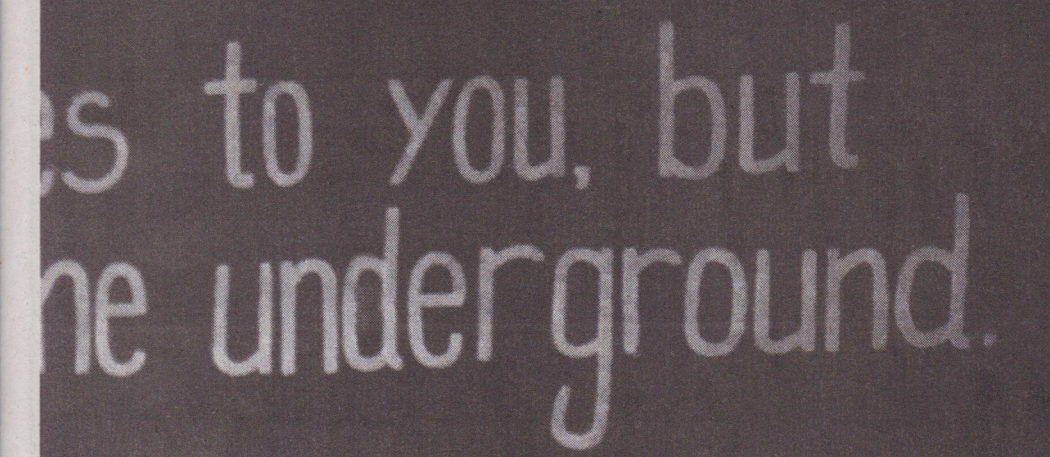
For a brief moment in time, the Underground Disco was a shining beacon that drew artists, adventurers, freaks, and misfits from all around the world into a sleepy small town in the middle of nowhere.

Author's note: Since the members of the Underground Disco gang had felt that they were too close to the story to be able to do it justice, this is an account of an outsider. I was never directly involved with the venue's activities, and I claim no credits or ownership for anything that has been done. This is an individual and highly subjective account of a visitor, supporter, friend, and an occasional participant in after-hours drunkery.

My then-girlfriend-now-wife and I moved to Beočin five years ago. Though I had spent my entire life in another small town literally across the river Danube, I knew next to no one there and next to nothing about it.

Our move to Beočin was more circumstance than desire, but we soon learned to appreciate it. Through work, music, and social circles, our lives already gravitated heavily towards the nearby city of Novi Sad, and the quaint, simple setting of Beočin presented a welcome change of pace to the steadily overcrowding and increasingly hectic urban center.

Once a bustling (if dusty) Eastern European industrial town centered around the biggest cement factory in former Yugoslavia, which at one point employed more than 2,000 people, Beočin has seen its ups and downs in recent history. The cement factory was privatized at the turn of the century, accompanied by massive layoffs. Some used their severance pay to start anew, some not so much. The town was struck with an intense opioid epidemic that had further thinned the ranks of a generation scarred by recent wars and poverty.



Even at the best of times, Beočin was never a cultural hotbed. While it would occasionally produce a notable figure or an event, the town didn't have any significant cultural tradition, whether institutional or alternative. Furthermore, in the past two decades it has seen nothing but steady decay and cultural degradation—a trend prevalent across Serbia.

By the time my wife and I moved there, the town was deeply enveloped in the typical small town apathy, depression, boredom, and isolation. Not that we minded! It was an enjoyable place to live if you picked your spots. Bordered by a sprawling river on one side and a gorgeous mountain on the other, the town had its little delights. If you had a car, some pocket money, and hopefully a decent neighbor or two to hang out with, you might even call it pleasant. You just didn't rely on it for any kind of relevant cultural offerings.

This was the environment that gave birth to a small DIY wonder that, no matter how briefly, put Beočin on the global underground map.

The spiritual predecessor to the Underground Disco was undoubtedly Novi Sad's Društveni Centar (DC), an influential occupied space that for a short but glorious spell became the epicentre of city's alternative culture. DC was a volunteer-run space for shows and other events with a decidedly leftist, anti-fascist attitude that has housed countless punk and hardcore bands, vagabonds, and freaks from all across the world. The venue had eventually burned down (narrowly avoiding the inevitable death by gentrification), but throughout its half a decade of existence, it had shown a new generation of kids just how much can be done with a bit of hard work, dedication and solidarity.

I don't remember when I first heard about what was to become the Underground Disco, but it must have been fairly early in its makings. Almost two decades of continuous playing in a number of punk and hardcore bands has filled my social circles with numerous representatives of a fairly small and tightly-knit scene, and along with some fortunate acquaintances-turned-friendships in Beočin, it makes sense that I would quickly catch wind of it.

Apparently, some kids were looking to revive a former discoteque located in the basement / fallout shelter of the town's "House of Culture," a relic of the former communist regime both in looks and in spirit. I got to know the outdated institution fairly well, having put in part time shifts at the local TV station housed in the building. These publicly owned local institutions were always heavily influenced by political parties in power, and House of Culture was no exception. Still, these kids worked some sort of magic to convince the local authorities to let them move into the decrepit abandoned basement and try to make something with it.

I was intrigued from the first moment. Even at 36, I'm still a sucker for that romantic narrative of kids in nowhereland taking matters into their own hands and making something out of nothing, fighting the status quo instead of simply accepting it. It is one of the building blocks of the punk ethos, yet so rarely found in today's internet-fueled global apathy.

I didn't know any of the kids involved. It seemed implausible that a small and isolated environment that hadn't seen any relevant countercultural activities in decades would even have a critical mass to pull it off. Good ideas and intentions are one thing, but the hard part in every DIY endeavor is the everyday grind, the thankless unseen work of cleaning up, carrying boxes, fixing the installations, and countless other chores that get shit done. This is where things usually break down, and

Dreddup

I just hoped they knew what they were in for.

Through mutual acquaintances I soon met Peca, the ringleader of the gang, for lack of a better word. A mix of street smarts, determined confidence, and a no-bullshit attitude, it was clear from the first glance that Peca was a doer. I liked him. He had his heart in the right place, and he seemed to know what he was doing.

The reason why we were put in touch was that Peca wanted to know whether any of my bands would be interested in playing in the new venue, and if I could help with contacts for some other bands. Looking back, it seems funny that one of the early worries was finding bands willing to come to Beočin. A few months further down the road, they would be so overbooked that they were forced to reject numerous traveling bands. "Build it, and they will come" indeed, as the voice told Kevin Costner in *Field of Dreams*. (Yes, I'm that old. Don't judge!)

I must admit that I was never much involved with the daily operations of the Disco, not early on when the space was being fixed and adapted, nor later when it got up on its feet. Obviously, I recognized the potential impact and the rare luxury that this space could represent in the local community, and I was happy to help out where I could, but I wasn't really asked all that often. The kids had it covered.

Fixing up the long-abandoned fallout shelter was the purest form of labor of love, and labor was aplenty. For weeks on weeks, the young volunteers worked their buts off to make the venue not just inhabitable, but also presentable. Even before Disco was opened, everywhere you looked you could see little details that let you know that the kids weren't doing it because they were forced or to simply do it—they actually cared.

The thing I loved the most about the Disco gang was the fact that it was not sectarian in any way—a trap that's easy to fall into, especially in smaller environments. These kids were both boys and girls, young and old, punks, metalheads, hip hop kids, and casuals. They didn't exclude anyone or adhere to any specific subculture. There was no bosses or leaders, and the place was open to everyone to organize any type of program. Entrance to all events was donation based, so anyone could enter regardless the contents of their pockets. As long as you weren't a dick to anyone and displayed the bare minimum of human decency, you were welcome.

The first events that took place in the Disco were anything but glamorous, but it was a start. Local bands that hardly had an audience outside of their immediate family members were quickly followed by bands that could actually pull some weight, and soon after it was time to book traveling bands from abroad. Suddenly, there were people from Novi Sad coming to shows in Beočin, and not the other way around. Even more importantly, the local community stuck in a perpetual status quo began seeing visitors from different countries, even different continents! Things were changing.

From bands to visitors, everyone left Beočin with a full heart and fond memories. The gang didn't have much, but everything they

had they were happy to share. They were grateful and appreciated everyone who would stray to their little oasis in the desert of depression, and made sure that everyone had a good time. Even when people were few, there was fun to be had, and I've been witness to more than a few amazing shows with no more than twenty people in the audience. I've also seen my share of bands that otherwise approached their craft with pride and responsibility unable to finish songs due to the fact that they were blackout drunk. It was easy to get swept up in the palpable euphoria in the Disco, and if there was a camera at hand, there would be some juicy blackmail material.

The relationship between the basement-dwelling Disco gang and the local establishment represented by the above ground floors of the House of Culture was always going to be an uneasy one. That specific Eastern European type of spineless, bootlicking public service employee would always have a hard time accepting something independent and outside of their direct control on their own territory.

Rumors started spreading even before the venue was officially open. It goes without saying that someone was fucking someone to get the space, someone was dealing drugs on the premises, someone was pocketing money from the bar, someone was using naive idealistic kids for their own personal interests, etc. For a while, things didn't escalate, but it was only a matter of time.

Personally, I don't think that the Underground Disco was perceived as a great threat by the local authorities. Yes, it was a bit of a thorn in their side, and over time it could've even grown to become a hub of critical thought and resistance, but I don't think that had much to do with why the gang was eventually evicted. I don't even think that there were any clear directions from the top and down the vertical line of power to deal with the issue.

People on the lower rungs of power within the establishment operate out of fear above everything else. Fear for their own positions, to be precise. Maintaining the status quo is the highest goal, and any kind of change only brings about the dreaded uncertainty. Any chance to nip a potential problem at the bud will be taken, and good things are often spoiled by overzealous public servants.

Underground Disco was a potential problem, even though its point was not to directly oppose the local authorities, but to simply breathe some life into a sedated community. Outside of the physical space they were given, the kids never asked for any other resources from the House of Culture. All that was asked was to simply be left alone to do their own thing, but ultimately, not even that could be done. The fear of anything "wrong" happening in a public institution, under the watch of the dutiful yes-men, would win out in the end.

Things went sour quickly. In the days leading up to the final eviction, Peca told me that the House of Culture staff have started causing problems. I don't know all the details, but I know that the gang had caught rumors of impending safety inspections, and it was clear that the wheels were put into motion to get them out of the public space. Still, Peca was optimistic, and he told me that they were working on finding a solution.

Next thing you know, a show planned to be held at the Disco was moved to a different venue (of all places, it was a cafe restaurant at the stadium of the local football club!). Only a few days before, Peca had told me that he hoped that it was temporary and that they hope to be back in the Disco soon, but when I arrived to the show I found him looking pretty glum. "It looks like it's over," he said.

Ultimately, the only thing the local authorities needed to do to support probably the most important thing to happen to the culture of the town in decades was to simply tolerate it, and not even that could be done.

The Disco crew began moving out a few days after the show at the stadium. There wasn't even a farewell concert or a party. The last event held in the venue was a benefit "guilty pleasure" party which I missed because of

illness. Looking back, I wasn't THAT sick, and I wish I had a chance to say my final goodbyes to a place that shone some light into a dark and bleak small town setting.

What next?

The Underground Disco has lost its physical premises, but the spirit lives on. The energy it has generated in the year of its activities won't disappear for a long while. The gang is still active booking occasional shows at the stadium cafe, which currently serves as a safe harbor before a more permanent solution can be found. The gang is actively seeking a new space for the venue, and I hope they will soon find a new home.

More importantly, the Underground Disco has stirred the spirit of the local community. It is a testament to what can be achieved through vision and determination, a living proof that people can take matters into their own hands and change their circumstances, no matter how bleak and discouraging they may seem. Even if this is the final chapter of the story of the Underground Disco (and I very much don't believe that to be true), it has left a permanent mark on hundreds of people who were, in one way or another part of it. There is no better proof of this than the numerous benefit shows and other events organized in the local scene and across the world by various bands and individuals that have passed through the Disco. The fact that they took something with them from the Disco and that they want to keep it going is the greatest incentive to persevere.

As for me, I will always have fond memories of the shows I've played and seen there, of the good times we've had, and of the pride I felt watching a young generation find its way through the dark, as well as small regrets over the times I could've been there and I wasn't. I will be forever grateful that these kids have given me a chance to walk the streets of Beočin and look at it in a slightly different, brighter, and better light.

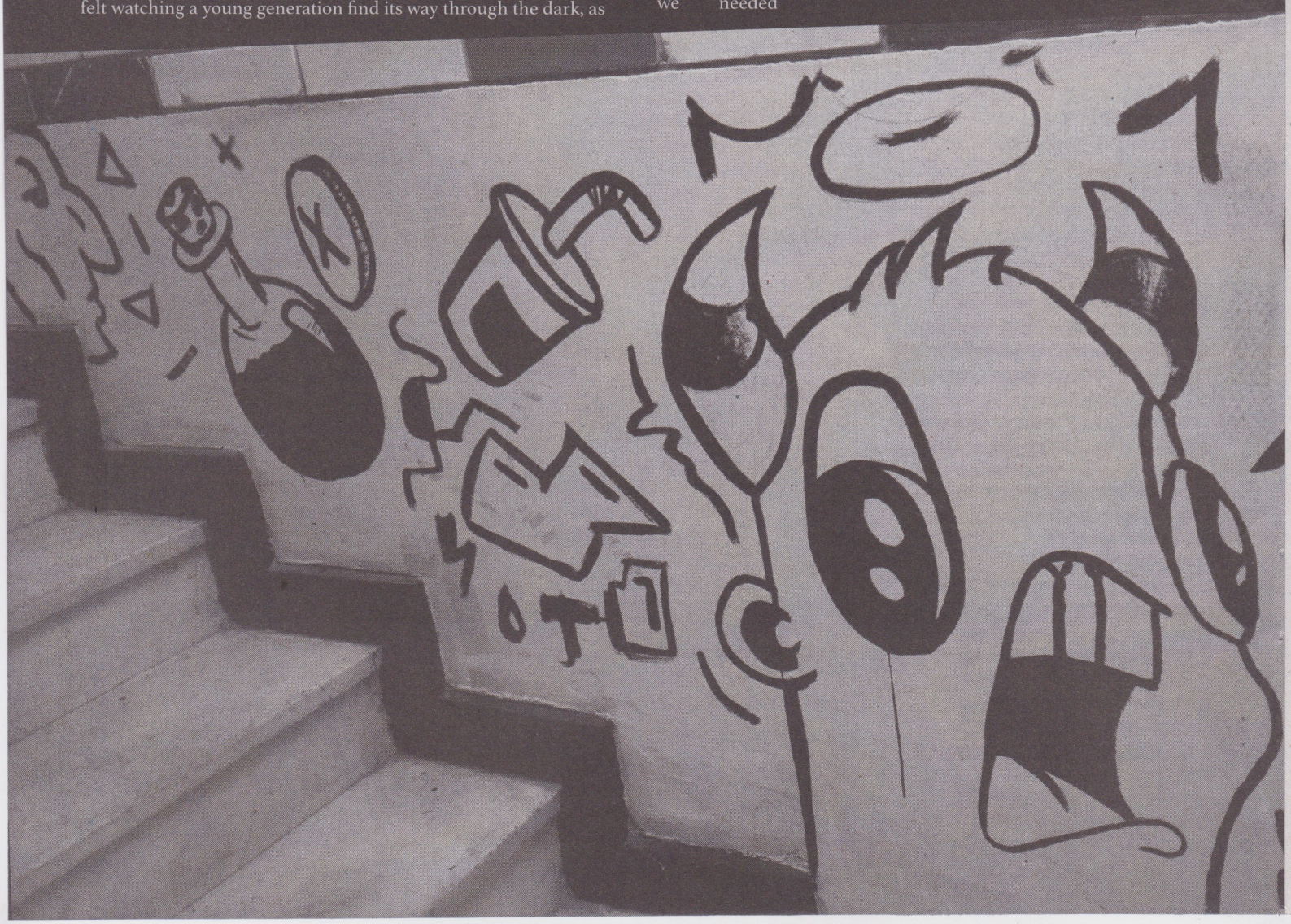
The Underground Disco is dead. Long live the Underground Disco!

An Open Letter to Beočin

The following lines were written by the members of the Underground Disco gang as an open letter intended for the local authorities. It was written in the aftermath of the eviction, but left unpublished once the heads had cooled, in the belief that it would simply fall on deaf ears. Still, it may serve as an additional document on what went on in the final days of Disco.

Communication with the youth of Beočin, as you will undoubtedly admit yourself, is quite minimal, and we were genuinely surprised and gladdened by the support of individuals from the local community in our attempts to obtain the space located in the Cultural Center building. The vision of our collective has always been closely tied to efforts to engage the hard working and talented youth of Beočin to apply their knowledge and skills in the task of building an environment that's supportive, modern, and allows them to spend their time constructively, share their experiences, learn from one another and realize their ideas.

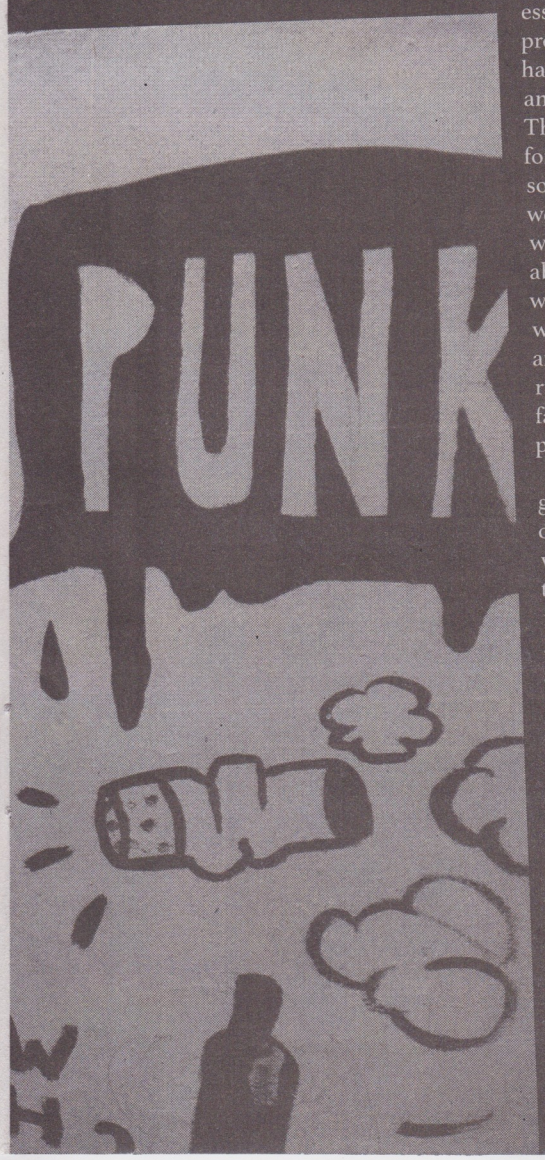
In all our work, we have never asked for money. What money we needed



we were able to make, but most of our work was done through volunteering—a thing so rare in these materialistic surroundings that many found our activities "suspicious." Yes, we know it's a novel concept—no one does anything for free these days, and it is no surprise that the volunteers were given various unflattering labels. Despite the fact that these labels have made us feel offended and betrayed and shook our belief that our work could be supported by those older, more experienced, and capable of understanding youthful enthusiasm and optimism, we have responded by answering all calls for help from local individuals and institutions. You may remember the kindergarten murals, our part in different humanitarian initiatives, our help with waste disposal, and a number of other things, but I guess not even that was enough to change any minds.

For the past year of its activities, our collective has organized more concerts of local and foreign artists than Beočin has seen or heard for the past three decades. Even you will surely admit that the numbers are impressive, particularly considering that it was all done without any financial support. Our activities have been broadly recognized as innovative and valuable... Elsewhere, of course.

Our entire country has caught word of Beočin, a wonderful little town whose youth erase the borders of its municipality and its country. Anyone willing to give it an objective look would recognize this as an overwhelming benefit to the local community and a chance for Beočin to stand out as its own brand. The municipality of Beočin has never given us any money for what was essentially our work on promoting it. Again, we have never asked for it, and we won't ever do so. The only thing we asked for was a chance to make something the best way we can. We wanted the whole world to know about Beočin, and we will achieve this, with or without your help. We are different. We don't run on any principles familiar to you and don't play by your rules.



Our guests, the guests of Beočin, have often been foreigners, which is not something that the Center's management and staff are familiar with. We apologize for this, and we get it: it is never easy when some strange youth comes to "your" door and prances and boasts, wishing to show all they can do then and there. You grow afraid if you're unused to it and if you haven't grown enough inside, where your heart and mind is. You grow afraid that they will take away your comfort zone where everything is easy and predictable, where no one makes any waves, where everything is so same and familiar that you have forgotten that any different things may exist in the world.

There are other worlds different to yours, where things are more colorful, where people speak in different languages and carry a different spirit. It's not easy facing these other worlds, because they force you to acknowledge and tolerate them, force you to question and change your own world and realize that there's so much more outside of it. Facing these other worlds is a risk, and we understand your inability to take risks. After all, a well that makes no waves is always safe—but it may not smell all that nice.

For the employees of the Cultural Center, we would like to clarify a few things regarding the lifestyle supposedly supported by our activities. A large number of our volunteers and guests are people who don't drink or do drugs, don't eat meat, people who lend their time to various causes that strive to make the world a better and more fair place to all living creatures. They love life and respect everyone else's right to live their lives the way they see fit. Still, it is easier to give them one look and assume that they are self-destructive, aggressive junkies, especially if you are not well-intentioned, educated, and informed. It is easier to accuse without any base, spread obscene lies without any consequences, and attack "those slackers" when "those slackers" have no interest in rebuking your obvious lies, nor the time or desire to dabble in gossip in an environment designed to suppress any non-establishment initiative and approach any act of enthusiasm with cynicism and hostility.

Time runs for all of us, but our time, unlike yours, is not budget funded, and we do not wish to use it to react to intrigue, start prosecutions, and make up excuses for what can't be excused. Whether you are paid for your work or not, time is the greatest value. And time is merciless in revealing what we have all done. As the saying goes, "the snow doesn't fall to cover the hill, but to reveal every beast's trail."

We wish to apologize to all of the Center's staff for not returning the venue to its original state upon our eviction. For that we are guilty. There are no real excuses for our actions, but we were unable to locate all the trash, dirt, and rat and human feces we had found there when we first entered. We hope you will forgive us and not hold it against us, particularly in the legal sense, since you have failed to sign the contract for the free use of space we have proposed, despite the fact that it's been sitting in your office for months. By the way, the paper you proposed was nothing more than a poor exercise in writing, and not a legal act supposed to regulate the rights and responsibilities of involved parties.

Thank you for any equipment we may or may not have used, as well as your gossip that we have kept some of it without asking. In all honesty, we don't need anything from you, because our lives are governed by a different set of values.

In the end, we wish to thank you for your help, cooperation, and understanding, however little of it there was. We will find a way to continue. Our story is not based on fees, projects, and material goods, but on pure love. This, we hope you will come to realize, is much stronger than any obstacles, gossip, and ugly lies found at every step in this suffocating environment.

To support Underground Disco, you can PayPal undergroundbeocin@gmail.com

BEOČIN BANDS

Become As One
Genre: Melodic Hardcore Punk
Founded: 2012
List of releases:
2012: *Foundation Crack* EP, Rebuild Records
2017: *Vreme Unistava Sve* EP, Rebuild Records
Tours: One tour with Business As Usual and Stand Der Dinge in 2013.
Second tour with Blind Youth in 2018
becomeasone.bandcamp.com

Casillas
Genre: Noise Rock / Metal / We are not guided by genres
Founded: 2013
Releases: Demo released trough bandcamp.
Tours: Shows across Serbia
casillas.bandcamp.com

Deep Steady
Genre: Instrumental ska-jazz
Founded: 2015
Releases:
2018: Deep Steady digipack, SKC Novi Sad
2018: Deep Steady CS, Underground Disco Beočin
tours: Gigs in Serbia and Croatia
deepsteady.bandcamp.com

Ground Zero
Genre: hardcore punk
Founded: 1999
Releases:
2003: "Revolt" single, compilation *All from the Heart*, SHCP Records
2006: *Possess Me* EP, self-released
2007: *Last Goodbye*, HAKO Bastards
2008: *Last Goodbye* Russian edition, Drink and Be Merry Records
2009: *Morbus Panonicus* Russian tour edition, Drink and Be Merry Records
2010: *Morbus Panonicus* European tour edition, self-released
2018: *Levitations in Suffering* EP 2018, self-released
Tours: 2
groundzerosaga.bandcamp.com

Niyazov
Genre: crust grind
Founded: 2004
Releases:
2007: *For Your Death Sign Here__*, self released
2008: *Nightmare of Society*, self-released
2009: *Turmenography*, unreleased four-way split
2018: *Systemfuck*, self released
niyazovpunk.bandcamp.com

Pestarzt
Genre: Hardcore, Crust
Founded: 2014.
Releases:
2015: Self titled CD-R, Alternative Youth
2015: CD-R split with Kronstadt (Czech Republic black metal), Alternative Youth
2018: 7" split with From Soil (Swedish crust), Abnegat / Alternative Youth / Dogma Destroyer / Pandora / Smudge / Soil Bound / Wargame
2018: Reissue of self-titled release on tape, Alternative Youth / Underground Disco Beočin
2018: Reissue of From Soil split on tape, Scaglia Di Rumore
Tours: Five tours (with 5+ days) and a few weekend tours, makes all in total 70 gigs since April 2015.
pestarzt.bandcamp.com

Shoplifters
Genre: Melodic punk rock with a strong Replacements / Hüsker Dü vibe
Founded: Spring 2002
Releases:
2006: *Technicolor Melodies* CD, SKC Novi Sad
2009: *Reach the Coast* split CD with the Phonerings, self released
2013: *A Fresh Start* digital album, self released
2013: White Flag / Shoplifters split EP, Deadlamb / Flix / Rad Girlfriend / SKC Novi Sad / Strictly Commercial Records
2015: *Smile* digital EP, self released
2016: *Believe* digital EP, self released
2016: *Believe* compilation CD, Waterslide Records
2017: *Forgiver* EP, Bartolini / Brassneck / PopKid / Waterslide Reords / White Russian
Tours: Two short European tours and countless shows in the former Yugoslavia region and across Western Europe
shoplifters.bandcamp.com

Tu Ima Zvuka
Genre: Punk rock
Founded: 2014
Releases:
2014: *Svaki Takav Dan* EP, self-released
Mašine Treba Da Rade, a Ljudi da Misle CD, self-released
Tours: Gigs in ex-Yugoslavia only
tuimazvuka.bandcamp.com

Vršnjačko Nasilje
Genre: Oi!
Founded: 2018
Releases:
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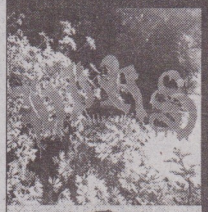

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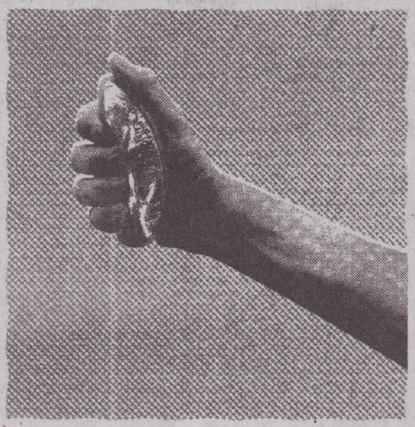

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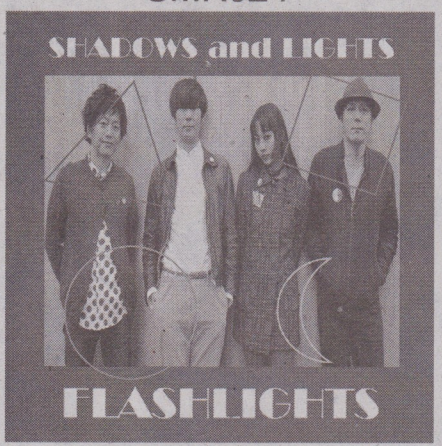

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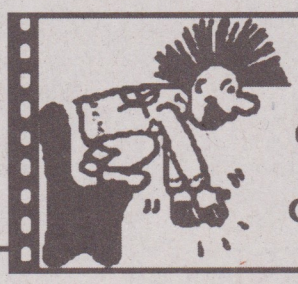


BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

It is that time of the year when I, the President of the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™, release our list of the best films of 2018. Making these best of lists is a bunch of bullshit, but who am I to deny anyone including myself this pointless annual ritual. Fortunately there were some great films this year.

Here are the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™ best films of 2018.

Here To Be Heard: The Story of The Slits

The thing about being a female in a band is people always qualify you with "you're pretty good for a girl" or some other such comment. The Slits didn't care. They used that prejudice to their advantage. They made music women would make, the way they wanted to, and it made people uncomfortable. That is why they are an inspiration. That attitude shines in **Here To Be Heard: The Story of The Slits**. The film focuses its attention on the band members and their story. It is a straightforward telling, but with a story this interesting there is no need to be overly creative.

Dead On Arrival: The Punk Documentary That Almost Never Was

I have seen **DOA: A Right Of Passage** so many times. It is the documentary about early punk rock that mainly focuses on the Sex Pistols' 1978 US tour. After hearing Johnny Rotten's and Malcolm McLaren's version of events ad nauseam, it was revelatory to hear from the people who made the film about their experiences of the Sex Pistols on tour. **Dead On Arrival: The Punk Documentary That Almost Never Was** is an extra on the Blu-Ray re-release of **DOA: A Right Of Passage**. It delves into the depths of how the film came to be from the perspectives of the people who made it: the guy who filmed it, the sound man, and even a fan who was interviewed in the documentary. The only disappointment is that director Lech Kowalski doesn't participate.

Sorry To Bother You

An absurd story of the travails of working man Cassius Green when he gets a job as a telemarketer in Oakland, California. He discovers a secret to the job, which makes him a sales star. When he gets promoted, he begins making a lot of money, but it comes at a cost not only to his fellow coworkers and his friends, but also to his conscience. **Sorry To Bother You** contains some great commentary on the way corporations conduct business and exploit workers as well as a great case for why workers need to stick together and stand up for each other. Fortunately, these heavy topics are encased in an entertaining and fun film. Bonus is that **Sorry To Bother You** will also be remembered as the film former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown didn't understand.

The Outhouse The Film 1985-1997

A documentary about a music venue in Lawrence, Kansas I have never been to nor have any personal connection with should not be this entertaining. Director Brad Norman gets everything right. Everyone who was involved, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, from the bands and bookers to the neighbors and sheriff are interviewed for this. The strangeness of the locale along with the reverence touring bands had for the Outhouse make this film so enjoyable.

Descent Into the Maelstrom

Even though I came away from **Descent Into The Maelstrom** thinking this is why you should never meet people whose music you love, I still couldn't help liking this Radio Birdman documentary. The members of Radio Birdman begin as rebels in the Sydney music scene. Their influences are not in sync with the other musicians of the 1970s. But as the individual parts come together, they discover their audience and help ignite the scene. They will fight with some of their contemporary Australian punks and eventually with each other. They break up, fade into obscurity, and reemerge at the end of the century, but you're never alone with a Smith & Wesson, baby.

The Public Image Is Rotten

The title makes me groan. If you know anything about Johnny Rotten Lydon, you know that he thinks he is the most important part of his bands, the Sex Pistols and Public Image Ltd. If you know anything about me, you know I have long held the belief that every band is the sum of its parts. Change one part and you have a different band. One thing **The Public Image Is Rotten** does is prove I'm right. Every time the PiL line up changes the band sounds completely different. Post-Pistols Lydon carried an arrogant chip on his shoulder that his next band would be different than his infamous band. It was. PiL's story is more interesting than the Sex Pistols' as well. Public Image Ltd. went for a more diverse sound while being pretty pretentious about it. That every single person involved gets a say in the story is what makes this documentary great. That and that Lydon still has hasn't learned.

They'll Love Me When I'm Dead

Orson Welles's last film **The Other Side Of The Wind** was finally released this year. **They'll Love Me When I'm Dead** is a documentary about that film. Later in his career, Welles had a hard time making films. **The Other Side Of The Wind** was filmed over many years whenever Welles could get the money. As a result, the film got tied up in many claims of ownership with various producers. While I thoroughly enjoyed **The Other Side Of The Wind**, the twists and turns of making the film are more fascinating.

Oil Capital Underground

While most early punk bands in the United States cite the Ramones as the major influence for starting a band, the bands in the early Tulsa, Oklahoma scene say it was the Sex Pistols. Not too many Americans got to see the Sex Pistols, but their tour made a stop in Tulsa. Some who saw the show started a band. Like most nascent scenes, Tulsa made it up as they went along, finding places to play and getting the people to show up. The bands and characters that came out of it are fun too.

Juliette, Naked

Although Tucker Crowe is hardly a punk in any stretch of the word, **Juliette, Naked** contains some excellent scenes about obsessive music fans. Everyone probably has that one band they freak out about, even if it isn't this crazed. Duncan is the obsessed one and his girlfriend Annie accidentally befriends the object of his fandom. Tucker Crowe stopped making music and disappeared after making a record people consider his masterpiece. When he reappears 25 years later, reality contradicts the legend that has grown in his absence.

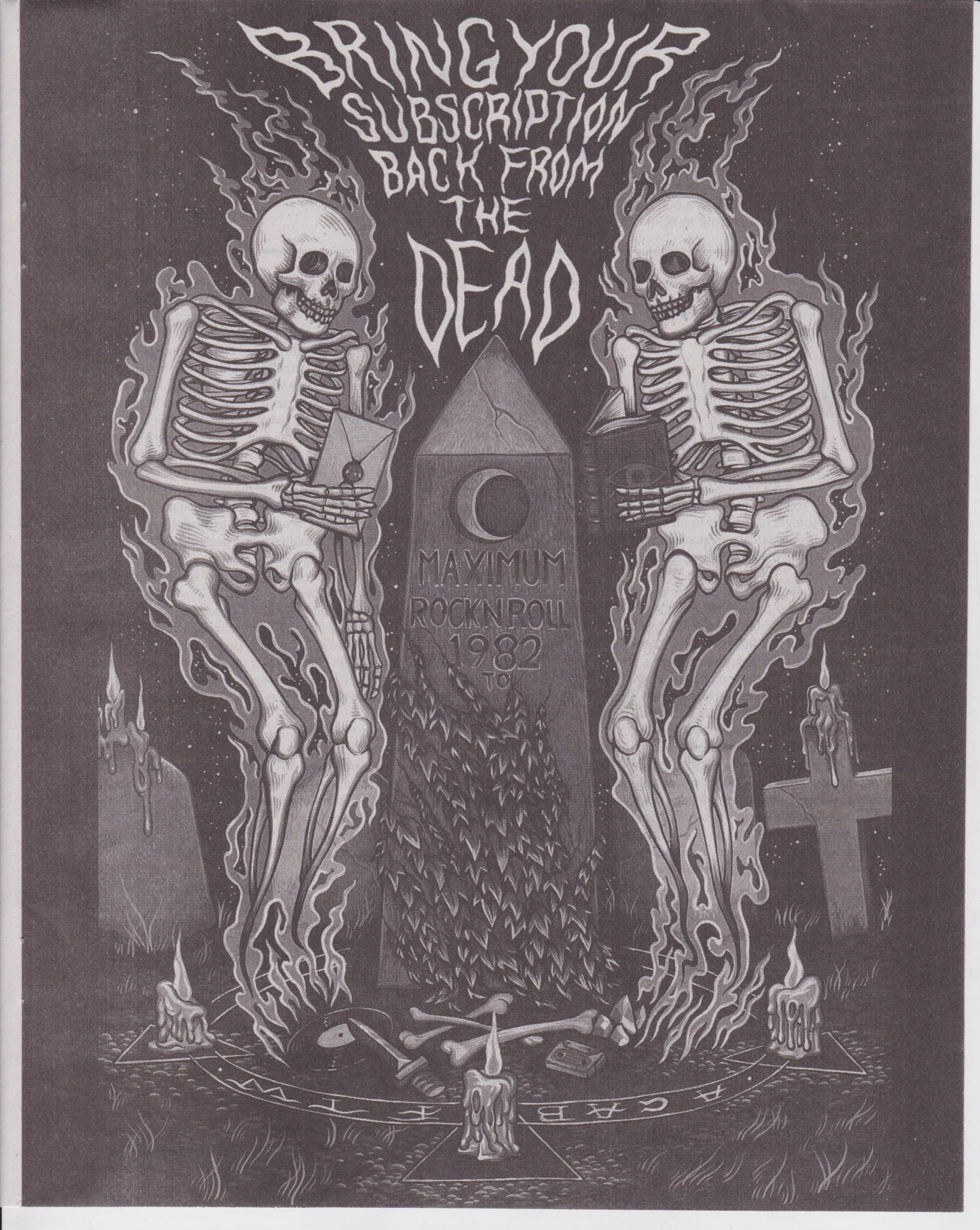
Ex-Libris: The New York Public Library

A three hour, seventeen minute visual appreciation of the New York Public Library. It covers the day to day minutiae, the activities and events. That should be mundane and unwatchable, but director Frederick Wiseman gives the viewer just enough tidbits to keep you interested. You will want to linger longer and see all the library has to offer.

Icepick To The Moon

The odd story of the Reverend Fred Lane. Lane was a lounge type singer with a humorous take on the genre. He got his start in college with the Raudelunas a musical act meets group of performance artists. He recorded a few albums then settled into a life of art and domesticity. This is how it all happened.

PS RIP Pete Shelley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FLEX! Japanese Punk, Hardcore, Mod—1975–1986
by Burkhard Järisch
Self-published, 2018
580 pgs | €29

Collector scum and other punk obsessives have been poring over Burkhard Järisch's monumental *FLEX!* book(s) for years; most consider them the definitive guide to American (and Canadian) punk / hardcore / power pop. Packed with thousands upon thousands of listings that have launched a million want lists, a million arguments between collectors, and a million frustrated tears from those who just can't get that one record that will plug the final gap in their collection, a record that they might have never heard of were it not for the tireless efforts of Järisch and his collaborators. Having conquered (most) of North America, the new *FLEX!* discography gives the same treatment to Japan.

The level of detail poured into this new book is just as exhaustive as the earlier work. Every record listing includes a scan of the cover art with variations as applicable (save a tiny handful of impossibly rare releases), track count and listing, label information, matrix notations, and year of release. Distinguishing features that indicate different pressings of the same record are noted. Information relating to bootlegs or compilations that include a band's songs from the time period covered is provided as well, and records that a band may have produced after 1986 are listed but not expanded upon.

The most important (and potentially controversial) element is the review that accompanies each listed record. These are generally relatively economical with the word count but exceptional in their ability to convey the essence of the record in terms of style, performance, and recording quality. While it is inevitable that someone's favorite disc will have gotten a tepid review, reading them in aggregate shows that, as a rule, these pocket-sized reviews are extremely accurate and reasonable, with the tendency being to highlight the good rather than focus on the negatives. As a punk purist, Järisch is slightly averse to metal-style guitar solos, but savvy readers will easily find a recommendation in what he terms a downside. The criteria for inclusion are a bit more relaxed than the earlier book, allowing for virtually anything that was musically or spiritually punk-adjacent to be reviewed, everything from garage rock blues bands' flexis released when they won a regional battle of the bands to noise to proto-prog with the faintest of punk leanings, the end result being that literally anyone who reads this magazine could open this book and find out about a record that they'd never heard of that is something they'd love to hear.

It would be easy to define this as simply an thoroughly researched and immaculately presented reference guide, but a deeper reading shows a variety of very interesting narratives are presented throughout. One of the most immediately engaging is the story of the Human Gas / Stali Nism split flexi, a record so rare that its very existence was a point of contention among elite collectors. In a review that is substantially longer than most, the story of the record's pressing and the work that various collectors did to verify its existence is a fascinating look into the ephemeral nature of DIY punk. There are also the tantalizing "artifact" listings for records whose existences are only semi-confirmed or are so rare as to have not been thoroughly vetted by the author and his team of collaborators, like the Milk Katze flexi or the Plastic Mechanical Pig single. Other throughlines emerge with a bit of flipping back and forth between items. For example, one can trace the evolution of proto-punk underground rockers Benitokage (whose "The Destroyer" / "Another Noise" is identified by Järisch as the first "real" Japanese punk single) into futuristic new wave rockers the Lizard, track the evolution of Gai into Swankys, from noise punk pioneers to the most irreverent upholders of punk tradition in Japan, or read up on the entirety of Michiro Endo's early career from the birth of the Stalin to his solo output and the more eclectic Michiro Get the Help! recordings. A particularly rewarding set of reviews that require only unidirectional page turnings follows the career of the bizarre and iconoclastic Hovlakin, a mindfucking noise collaborative whose aggressively DIY approach was more punk than many of their be-Mohawked peers.

This book would be a must-buy for a certain set even if it were printed on soiled tissues (or inky newsprints that gets your fingers dirty, ha!) but it's beautifully presented as well, perfect bound in a full-color cover and printed on high-quality paper that will stand up to endless perusals. Needless to say, this tome is an essential purchase for anyone who is now or ever intends to become a collector of Japanese punk or punk-adjacent genres.

—Andrew Underwood

Health Care Revolt: How to Organize, Build a Health Care System, and Resuscitate Democracy—All at the Same Time
Michael Fine
PM Press, 2018
174 pages | $15.95

The United States does not have a health care system; it has a health care market. Health care is a commodity that not every American can afford. Americans spend obscene amounts on health care each year, yet this spending is not proportionate to health outcomes. Spending three or four times more than the countries with the best health statistics, Americans rank forty-third in the world for life expectancy. The Affordable Care Act attempted to patch up health care disparity in the U.S. by mandating health insurance for all and expanding Medicaid—but what if health insurance companies are the problem, not the solution? Poor health outcomes in the U.S. are consequences of treating the health of a nation as a market, the author says.

Author Dr. Michael Fine describes the institutional racism and classism that prevent many from receiving necessary care, an injustice with lethal consequences. Black infants in the U.S. are more than twice as likely to die as white infants due to unequal care. High medical

costs exacerbate the woes of those already living poverty. The sick get sicker and the poor get poorer. People who cannot afford a primary care provider rely on hospital emergency rooms as their main source of care. Emergency rooms are crowded, visits are expensive, and hospitals have high rates of disease transmission. Unfamiliar with a patient's family and personal history as a primary physician would be, hospital workers cannot guarantee the best possible outcome for their patients. Because private companies provide medical record systems, a patient's individual record cannot be accessed at a separate institution.

Hospital administrators award themselves hefty salaries and are invested in patients spending as much money as possible, for unnecessary treatments, so that they may award themselves revenue-based bonuses. In a near-comical display of capitalistic intentions, they often encourage hospital employees to refer to their patients as "customers." (I found this last tidbit so cartoonishly evil that I asked some health care professionals if they could confirm it. They could.) Hospital doctors and nurses suffer stressful working conditions because of the commercialization of health care; they work long hours and their performance is rated on efficiency. Encouraged to pack in as much work as possible, doctors are unable to check on all their patients in a single shift. Because of the exhaustion of caregivers, patients, in turn, suffer a poorer quality of care. Hospitals focus on palliative care, treating symptoms rather than providing preventative care. Preventing maladies is not lucrative.

As a physician and public health strategist, Fine speaks from a career of frustration yet optimism about national health. The author sets this book apart from others of the genre by providing a specific game plan for a U.S. health care system. Other books may have me nodding my head in righteous fury as I read about injustices, but then the book ends without suggesting solutions or a vision for the immediate future. I was long ago convinced that the world is an unjust place, but what now? I value a call to action—the more specifics the better. Fine's model is detailed, containing ideal patient to doctor and doctor to health center ratios. He wants to redirect patient flow to community health centers, where the health professionals will be informed of and personally concerned with issues and trends in the community. Crowded hospitals and pricey specialists should no longer be the first stop when a health issue arises. This chapter and others would benefit from diagrams or other imagery to lay out their ideas, but the overall messages are clear: the health care world needs to prioritize communities.

Dr. Fine uses the phrase "act up" on several occasions, perhaps intentionally calling to mind the direct action group and change agents that demanded attention to the HIV / AIDS pandemic. He calls on health professionals to stand up for their patients, prioritize care over profits, and organize. Unionized nurses have already improved hospital conditions, but health care workers across job titles must work together to form together a justice-minded system.

—Caitlin Xavier

Fascination
by Kevin Killian
Semiotext(e), 2018
312 pages|$16.95

Kevin Killian's collected memoirs, *Fascination* is a heady mélange of youthful folly, sex, booze, and unflinching self-reflection. Killian is one of the pioneers of the New Narrative movement alongside other such transgressive luminaries as Dennis Cooper, Dodie Bellamy, Gary Indiana, and the late, great Kathy Acker. Founded by Bruce Boone and Robert Glück in the late 1970s in San Francisco, the New Narrative movement grew out of the language poetry scene and is an experimental school of writing that subversively mixes high and low cultures and is generally characterized by a pastiche of stream of conscious / non-linear narrative, appropriation, post-modern theory, pornography, autobiography, and references to pop culture. All of which are present, to some degree, in *Fascination*. The book is divided into three sections: the first section is the previously published, but long out of print, "Bedrooms Have Windows," and the hitherto unpublished follow-up, "Bachelors Get Lonely," and closing out the collection, "Triangles in the Sand," Killian's poignant recollections of his brief affair in the 1970s with the late composer / producer, Arthur Russell.

Originally published as a standalone work in 1989, "Bedrooms Have Windows" is a gauzy and introspective portrait of Killian's adolescence spent in Smithtown, a Rockwellesque suburb of Long Island, New York. Here Killian offers up vibrant tufts of his formative years like so many dandelion seeds tossed into a summer wind. Fistfulls of small-town ennui and the decadence that lurks beneath including juvenile dalliances with drinking and weed, the rampant hedonism one encounters while attending an all-boys Catholic school, and an eyebrow-raising affair with a married man. Killian provides just enough detail to keep us engaged but pulls back enough to leave us hungry for more. But "Bedrooms Have Windows" is not all salacious shock and awe; threaded through the fragmented, erotic, recollections are a young man's search for belonging as well as the journey of a young writer discovering his calling. It was Kilian's friendship with a peer named George Grey that fomented his interest in the act of writing. Grey was a rather interesting character with a penchant for writing novelizations of movies he had never seen as well as placing lost and found ads in the local paper that re-told key moments from Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. Grey and Killian even began writing their memoirs together, which they titled *The Bungalow Mystery*. However, as so often happens with those precious and impactful relationships from our younger days, Grey and Killian drifted apart. As Killian wistfully and succinctly writes of their friendship, "We felt outside society. It was delicious. But he is lost to me now."

"Bachelors Get Lonely" is the follow-up to "Bedrooms Have Windows," and it finds Killian delving deeper into the self-destructive worlds of risky sex and substance abuse he explored in his youth. No longer a dilettante, early adulthood finds Killian in a miasma of debauchery and excess. While Killian's battle with the bottle is at the forefront, it is not the main thrust of the narrative. This, thankfully, isn't your run of the mill, tired and trite addiction / redemption tale. In this section, Killian provides more sordid snapshots from his debauched youth including his foray into blue movies and encounters with lascivious Catholic priests. The most memorable chapter, though, is the one titled "Spurt." The chapter opens with a drunk Killian speeding down the highway, despondent over the suicide of his sometime lover and Ph.D. advisor, and it ends with a kinky Scotch and cocaine-fueled hook-up at a roadside motel that would make most S&M aficionados clutch their pearls. Yes, it is that intense. Killian, however, is more than a one trick pony; ignominy is not all that he presents us with here. In "Bachelors Get Lonely," Killian also offers a touching meditation on aging in the form of a conversation between his more even-headed adult-self and his younger audacious-self, revisiting his youthful aspirations and measuring them against his current, grown-up reality. The results are disappointment wreathed with humor. You feel the sting of his unrealized ambitions but can't help but chuckle at Killian's youthful hubris. A conflict anyone in middle age will recognize and relate to. Rounding out this section are Killian's recollections of his New Narrative compatriots, including a riotous anecdote about Kathy Acker, a humanizing portrait of the late S&M performance artist Bob Flanagan, and a moving tribute to Sam D'Allesandro, a brilliant young writer, snuffed out egregiously early by the scourge of AIDS.

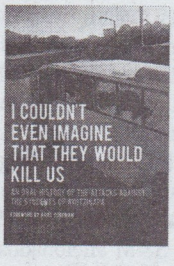
The tragedy of AIDS also haunts the final section of the book, "Triangles in the Sand." In this work, Killian ruminates on his brief and

BOOKS

somewhat awkward affair with Arthur Russell. Russell would go on to gain a certain level of renown in the musical underground for his work as a songwriter and producer before succumbing to complications from AIDS in the early 1990s. Killian first meets Russell in the halcyon days of the late 1970s. Russell, though, was not Killian's intended quarry. Killian had initially set his sights on Allen Ginsberg, who had come to perform along with his backing cellist, Russell, for the Gay Student Alliance at SUNY Stony Brook, where Killian was a grad student. His goal was to seduce Ginsberg, who Killian viewed as his ticket out of the doldrums of Stony Brook, New York. Things, however, did not shake out that way. Ginsberg, despite his reputation as a chicken hawk, had no interest in the 25-year-old Killian. After Ginsberg's performance, Killian was tasked with driving Russell and his cello back to Manhattan. Killian initially had no interest in Russell, haughtily seeing himself as more attractive than the acne spotted young man, who at the time wasn't totally out, but wasn't entirely closeted either. Despite the rocky start, they did end up forging a loose friendship that briefly became amorous. "Triangles in the Sand" is one of the more difficult areas of the book to move through, not because of any extreme sex or substance abuse, but because each page is soaked in regret. That specific and immutable regret of an adult looking back and acknowledging how they fucked up in their youth and realizing now that moment is gone forever and there is no way back. At the time, Killian didn't appreciate his friendship with Russell, who he devalued as a consolation prize, because he was still too fixated on the failed seduction of Ginsberg. Ginsberg, that big impossible trophy that blinded Killian to the very real and very tender relationship he held within his grasp with Russell.

Achingly soulful and deliciously baroque, *Fascination* lives up to its name. It is a striking account of queer life in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as a scintillating document of the New Narrative movement, but also the story of a man who has battled his demons and lived to tell about it. As Killian explains of those years with both sincerity and a hint of smirking irony, "Move along the velvet rope, run your shaky fingers past the lacquered zigzag Keith Haring graffito: You did not live in our time! Be Sorry!

—Aaron Nielsen



I Couldn't Even Imagine They Would Kill Us: An Oral History of the Attacks Against the Students of Ayotzinapa
by John Gibler
City Lights Books, 2017
262 pages | $16.95

The Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College is in the state of Guerrero less than 200 miles north of Acapulco. It is an all-male college established in 1926. The college has six instructors who teach 80 or so students. The idea of the school from day one was to bring education to poor areas in rural Mexico. Large murals are painted on the exterior of the school that portray previous conflicts with authority figures and leftist leaders who attended Ayotzinapa.

Every year on October 3, protestors march from Tlatelolco to Zócalo in Mexico City in commemoration of the massacre of hundreds of student protestors ordered by Mexican president Gustavo Dìaz Ordaz the day before the 1968 Olympic Games. "The government denied that the massacre had taken place," John Gibler writes in a footnote, "[they] called it a 'confrontation,' disappeared many of the dead, and conducted mass arrests of student leaders."

On September 26, 2014, a hundred students from the Teachers College traveled to Iguela and commandeered five buses for travel to the October 3 demonstrations, Gibler writes in his prologue, "a practice mostly, if bitterly, tolerated by the bus companies and drivers." José Luis Abarca Velázquez, mayor of Iguela, ordered the students to be stopped. He believed that the students were planning to protest an event hosted by his wife, María de los Ángeles Pineda Villa, who has relatives connected to the drug cartel.

Around 9 o'clock that night, state police and possibly others close to the cartel stopped the buses and fired on the students. The students fought back with rocks. Then the cops and the other men left. They drove away, leaving one student dead and others injured.

They confused a youth soccer team with one of the commandeered buses and fired upon it as well. For the next four hours, the students attempted to unpack the chaos. They called friends back at Teachers' College, and members of the media, telling them what had transpired.

After midnight, caravans of dark vehicles filled with men in dark masks, dark clothing, and machine guns approached the students. These men took aim and fired upon students still on the buses. Some of the journalists had arrived and heard these shots. More were killed; one was mutilated, his face and ears cut off. The men went away after maybe ten minutes and again, for four hours nothing happened: no ambulances, no more cops, and little presence from the military. Bodies lay bleeding in the streets and the buses left unattended in jack-knife positions across the highway.

Some of the students found sanctuary in the houses of friendly people living in Iguelan. Others travelled to their parents' homes and never returned to school. Some woke up in the hospital, and forty three others were never seen again. In the book one of the students remembers, "I peeked through the window and could see where the police were putting several compañeros in trucks and then took them away."

Four days after the incident, the mayor and his wife ran off. They were later found and arrested for nine killings, including six of the Teachers College students. Marches followed after September 26. These protests, against the lackluster investigation made by the state, were attended by students, compañeros, and the disappeared students' parents. Signs were flown that read "They were taken alive, return them alive."

Later, a mass grave was found in a garbage dump. Workers at the site said the grave had not been there the day before. Remains were found and tested. Members of the gang Guerreros Unidos were apprehended and told a story of being given the students as hostages of the police, burning the bodies and pouring the remains into the river . One of the investigators on the case said that the remains found were very unlikely from the bodies of disappeared students and some of the students' parents refuse to believe their sons are dead.

The title *I Couldn't Even Imagine They Would Kill Us* is a direct quote from one of the Ayotzinapa students that is both a striking title that garners at least a second glance but also speaks to the cognitive dissonance these students felt throughout that night and, one would suppose, continue to feel. As Gibler writes in the early pages of the book, "I hoped the readers would... accompany, listen to the stories... that describe a night of chaos and horror, erratic communications, confusion, shock and disbelief." This did lead to some confusion having been completely unaware of this story and its larger implications. I watched some films and read some other material on this grim event, and pieced together the story. I am bewildered and feel a need to understand it.

The only thing I'm certain of is the parents, families, and compañeros of these disappeared students have suffered with little conclusion for too long and there does not seem to be much on the horizon in terms of the loose ends being tied up.

Stories are told from multiple angles and thus the same vignette might be told over and over. This style does grind a reader down, especially with a story as harrowing as this, but it also allows all the voices of the students. A voice that certain forces tried to silence. A voice, like all voices, that deserves to speak. This book offers the door to a whole world that is not easy to look at but that needs to be seen.

—Steve McMillan

Witches, Witch-hunting, and Women
by Silvia Federici
PM Press, 2018
106 pages | $14

For fans of Federici's first book, *Caliban and the Witch* (1998), *Witches, Witch-hunting, and Women* is a long-awaited follow-up. Anarchist, Marxist, and feminist readers everywhere who enjoyed and critiqued *Caliban and the Witch* have been hoping for Federici to return with a continuation and expansion of her original text. *Witches, Witch-hunting, and Women* is an essay split into two parts: the first summarizing and revisiting the theory of witch-hunting as primitive accumulation in early capitalism, and the second focusing on how the evolved practice is being used in neo- and post-colonial economies today. In retouching upon the European witch hunts during early formation of capitalism, Federici hones in on the emotional violence and manipulation that occurred to set the stage for capitalist patriarchy. This detailed and fine-tuned analysis of the destruction of communalism, female friendship, and women's societal power is essential for putting modern capitalist culture into context. By giving readers a digestible run-down of the tactics used by powers implementing capitalism, we are empowered to understand how behaviors and assumptions today have been informed and perpetuated over the centuries.

Federici dives primarily into analyzing the traumatic repercussions of the English enclosures—which were the first privitations of communal land, and the sketch marks on the blueprint for capitalist colonialism. Building off of that generation's trauma, Federici takes a look at how capitalist powers taught societies to fear the women who mourned the communal lands and spoke out against the enclosures. Here we see the first image of a witch: an elderly, poor, childless woman who bitterly "curses" the new value changes in her community and continues to practice the old ways of medicine. Within the new capitalist value system, she is seen as a burden when she is too old to give birth to a new labor body, or she is seen as evil if she has decided not to procreate. Powerful speculative rumors accused these women of using wicked magic to make other women infertile and bring destruction to neighboring properties. For these reasons, women who were accused as witches were persecuted and killed. Federici finishes Part 1 by analyzing the strategy and psychology behind women turning their backs on each other in fear of also being burned as a witch, rather than uniting in opposition to the new patriarchal and capitalist values and violence.

This analysis is crucial for relating why so many Western feminists movements of today fail to stand in solidarity with women worldwide. In the second half of *Witches, Witch-hunting, and Women*, Federici drives home the ways in which witch-hunting is still a primary mechanism of implementing capitalism in colonial endeavors today, specifically analyzing the witch hunts in several present-day African countries. Federici argues that Western feminists who don't understand the historical context for capitalist patriarchy can't fully understand the plight of today's colonized woman. In Part 2, Federici implores Western feminist movements to denounce and fight against colonization and capitalism in order to truly stand against violence against women worldwide.

While this addendum to *Caliban and the Witch* was necessary, it fell short of addressing some of the criticism that Federici received for that first book. In *Witches, Witch-hunting, and Women*, Federici still speaks of gender in only binary terms, which is ironic because the gender binary is a construct of capitalist patriarchy. To pursue the relationship between witch-naming and the creation of the gender construct would only benefit her argument, yet she continues to erase that history in her writing. She makes only one mention of violence against transgender and gender-nonconforming people in the entire book, and it reads like a sentence added in after receiving feedback that maybe she should include something about it. All in all, this book is a digestible text about how the history of violence against women informs modern Western culture, and how new capital accumulation is happening in a parallel way today. Federici's focus on modern decolonization coupled with her suggestions to fellow Western feminists to engage with global solidarity makes *Witches, Witch-hunting, and Women* an exciting stand-alone read.

—Vicky Cassis

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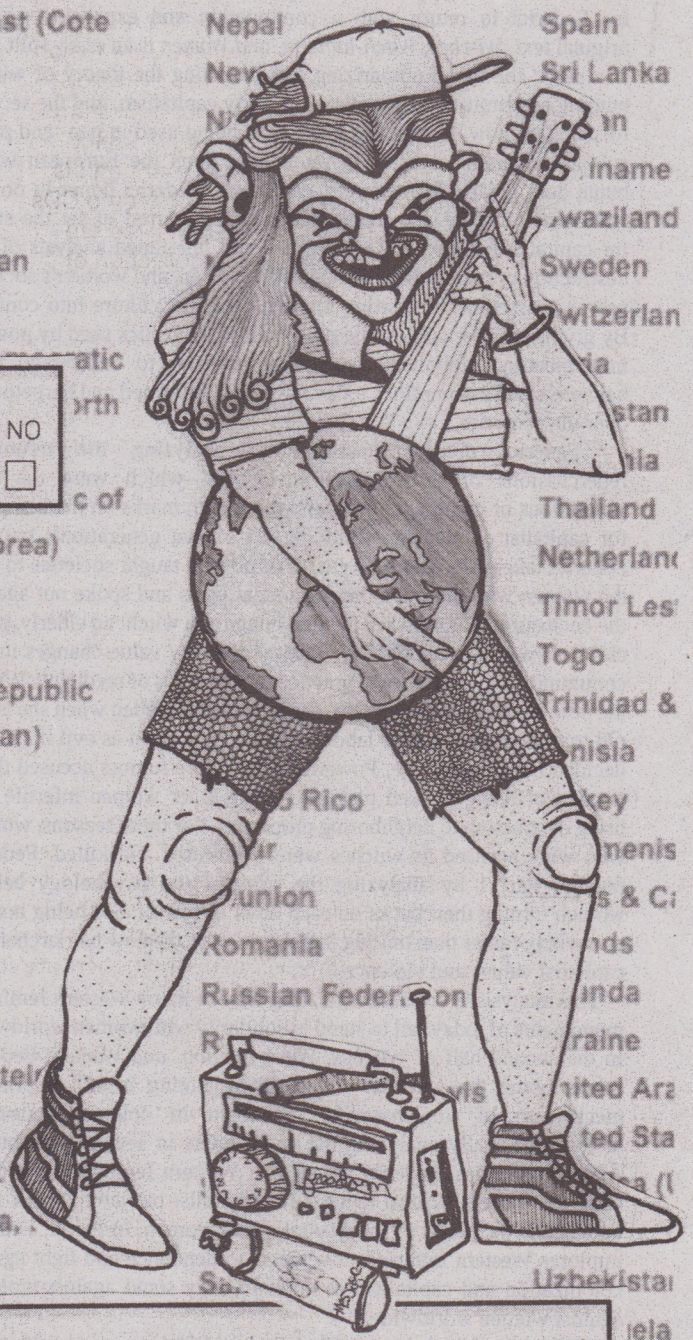

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(PA) Pete Avery
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RS) Ramy Silyan
(WN) Robert Collins

ACID RUNS – "II" LP

ACID RUNS definitely recall that overdriven turn-of-the-century Scandinavian rawk sound, but (thankfully) bring punk to the forefront. A hairy endeavor with zero nuance, just full-steam hard rock. A one-and-done spin to these ears... (MC)
(Teen Wolf)

ASESDIO – "...Y Rodaran Cabezas" LP

This is one of my favorite Oi! releases this month. It's simple yet driving and energetic. It sounds like *Smash the Disco*'s-era the BUSINESS, with a dark tone and low and gruff vocals reminiscent of LA's CRIMINAL. (AJ)
(Mendeku Diskak)

BOOJI BOYS – "Weekend Rocker" LP

"Piscine Perfect" is the best song I have heard in many, many months. Like, "Only a Shadow" good, but just in terms of quality, not, like, similar to that. Total stunner. More broadly, *Weekend Rocker*—"Piscine Perfect" included—probably veers much closer to GUIDED BY VOICES than BOOJI BOYS would care to admit, but, fuck, I'm just going to say it: there are some subtle R.E.M. rips buried in here, too. The band keeps it all messy and hyped, though, and the vocals are way damp, so all that pop rock shit is thoroughly stained over, and for the better, I'd say. We all have too many carbs in our diets as it is, right? Party band, but with vodka. Only complaint is that there's the occasional riff that sounds like it was invented sometime after the year 2000, and a band like this has no business acknowledging that anything ever existed after the turn of the millennium. I'm in love. (MR)
(Drunken Sailor)

BOOTLICKER – "6 Track EP" EP

Wow, the catchiest (and maybe a little melodic?) D-beat I've heard in ages! Gritty and *loud* production elevates what could otherwise be doomed to dollar bin hell. While many bands drench their sound in reverb, BOOTLICKER is dry and blown-out for optimal impact. The guitar is barely overdriven, adding a stabby element (especially paired with the higher octave bass lines) that highlights the masterful strumming. Fans of MEANWHILE and FY FAN, get on board! Supremely satisfying EP. (MA)
(Neon Taste / Slow Death)

BOOZE AND GLORY – "Chapter IV" LP

There's a wave of bands playing a well-polished version of Oi! that basically sounds like a cross between LAST RESORT and DROPKICK MURPHYS but rocking the classic Fred Perry skinhead look. BOOZE AND GLORY is part of this wave, alongside bands like OLD FIRM CASUALS and BISHOPS GREEN. If you are into that sort of thing, this record certainly delivers, and I wouldn't judge you for liking it. Lord knows I own so many records from DISCHARGE rip-off bands and enjoy them because I love DISCHARGE so dearly. But even as an Oi! fan I can't find anything I really like on this LP. It feels very generic, and apart from the gruff vocals, lacks the grittiness I seek out in Oi! records. I think this could make for a good gateway into Oi; if you're new to the subgenre, check out CAMERA SILENS, the BRASS, RIXE, and NO TIME after this and you'll see what I mean. (AJ)
(Pirates Press)

BRAVE HANDS – "To End All Worth" LP

Emotional, heartfelt pop punk by way of Portland, Oregon that sounds like it should be coming out of an east coast basement in 1998. Anthemic dueling vocals, blasting drums, and so much melody! This LP rocks. All of the songs are bangers and every track seems to have an endless catalog of hooks. This is one of the most sincere and honest releases I have heard in a while. BRAVE HANDS grabs you, reels you in, and keeps you for the entirety of the record. Songs like "Hero," "We Don't Need No Words," and especially "Evacuation Day" will solidify BRAVE HANDS in punk memory for many years to come. Don't sleep on this LP. For fans of FISCHER, RVIVR, and LATTERMAN. (RS)
(Salinas)

THE BRIEFS – "Kids Laugh At You / She's The Rat"

The first release from the BRIEFS in ten years, this is catchy rock'n'roll that's not a big leap from their previous catalog, but still solid. Both songs are skillfully executed with the kind of vigor I wasn't necessarily expecting from a band that's been laying low for the last decade. (CR)
(Taken By Surprise)

BYSTANDER – "Bystander" EP

Wow, straightedge bands are still sending records to *Maximum Rocknroll*. This is ex-members of TRIAL and DECLINE and sounds better than either of 'em. Bit of a '90s Rev / New Age throwback, but heavier and pretty fucking fast. Plenty of epic pick slides and group singalongs, and seriously SXE—"*straightedge*" is the chorus of the first song. This seems to be the Euro press, but there's apparently a good old 'Merican pressing on various color wax combos and a Greek tape release. Can't imagine there are too many other contenders for SXE in 2018, so get on it. (GB)
(Goodwill)

CARBONAS – "Your Moral Superiors" LP

An epic dive into the CARBONAS archive! Trashed out two chord wonders and catchy garage pop perfection all at the same time—this is no one-dimensional group with a tame idea of what is possible in the constraints of the format! This collection demonstrates their dynamic sound and the fuck you aura present in all the various incarnations of the band. "Blackout" as the intro track!! Savage pop power destruction sound! A steak for your black eye! Demonstrative evidence that CARBONAS were making some of the best 45s in the '00s. This is more CARBONAS than any sane person would know what to do with; it's music to lose your mind to, a double LP to endlessly flip over until you age back into it. Catchy relentless trash sound. It's cool having all the things from the junk drawer and karaoke nites exposed for all true maniac fans, but this really brings home how fucking great the 45s were! And listening to 40 or so songs by one band in one sitting is one definition of *MRR* shitwork, even if you're inclined toward their particular vision. There are a ton of classic hits on this and maybe this signals that some of the LPs that have edged into "this is a $40 record?!" territory will get reissued? (LG)
(Goner)

CELL – "Contempt" EP

Drunken Sailor puts CELL's demo to wax, giving this 2017 mid-paced knuckle dragger from Montreal some breathing room. Like GAG or INSERVIBLES, all sinister and shit, with space echo reverb vocal menace and *perfectly timed* pick slides. Hardcore. CELL's 2018 output is better, but this is still a crusher. (MR)
(Drunken Sailor)

CHEAP APPEAL – "You Lose" EP

Beefy sweatshirt hardcore from Vancouver. Never out of control, this is CHEAP APPEAL's first record, but the band is clearly full of scene vets. Good stuff, gruff and tuff with expert packaging. Every songs rips, and there's plenty of variance. Maybe more mosh parts, or would that be too much to script? RIYL thick sweat and neck veins. (MR)
(Neon Taste)

CHRONIC SUBMISSION – "Empty Heads Poison Darts" LP

Crazy obscuro '80s Canada demo now on wax!! Originally reviewed by Tim Yo in 1984, someone apparently got their hands on this rarity. I've heard a fair amount of '80s hardcore from the frozen North, and I gotta say, there aren't too many quintessential early '80s hardcore records from Canada. But this shit *shreds*!! Unrelenting hardcore power with that perfect mix of mania and unmistakable and strangely melodic raw punk vox. Mullet singer has one of those unique voices, almost like DARBY CRASH. You can tell these guys are basically metallians; thankfully, they stuck with hardcore long enough to make this tape. Guess I gotta go track it down now!! *Killer*!! With a poster for your wall too!! (GB)
(Schizophrenic)

COLOR TV – LP

Tripped out pop punk / garage punk that could definitely party all night. This record incorporates enough echo effect and fuzz—without compromising the integrity of the actual sound—to give it a new and refreshing feeling. Like you are seeing your favorite unstoppable pop punk band again, only this time, on drugs! Except without even taking the drugs. Full of hooks. A real winner. (HB)
(Deranged)

COLD FEET – "The Score" EP

Totally fine hardcore punk outta Baltimore. Nothing here is gonna stick with you, but it's fun while it lasts! Fast, energetic, snotty, probably really good live. (MF)
(self-released)

THE COMPLICATORS / EMPIRE DOWN – split EP

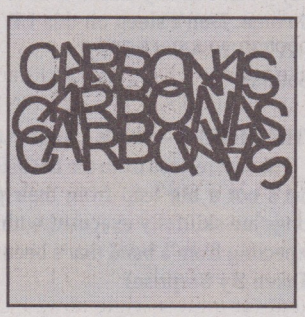
Pretty solid street punk release. Good guitar and vocal tone, energetic and structured. CAREER SOLDIERS and early MONSTER SQUAD come to mind as comparable bands. I think I like the COMPLICATORS's side slightly more—that first song "Too Old" had me laughing (with them not at them!). The chorus goes "*I am too fucking old, and I don't care!*" (AJ)
(Pirates Press)

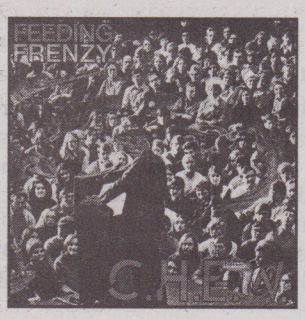
CORNER BOYS – "Just Don't Care" EP

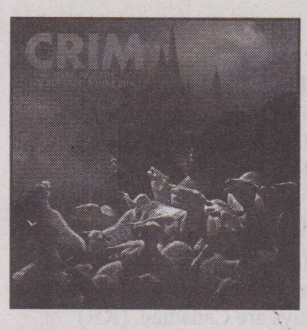
This Canadian trio seems to take most of their aesthetic cues from the very pop end of classic UK punk, but there's a '90s cross-pollinated sound—a mash of pretty traditional pop punk bounce and DIY-informed charm—that manages to hold my interest and prevent reflexive recoiling. It's almost as if they're from Sacramento or something! A very hearts-on-sleeve jaunt that manages to hold interest. (MC)
(Drunken Sailor)

CRACK CLOUD – LP

This is "the first two EPs of original material on one LP." Side A was a 2016 cassette. It has a GANG OF FOUR anthemic dance rock style with occasional blasts of JOY DIVISION-esque guitar sounds. Side B is from a 2017 EP plus one extra song. It is a bit more lo-fi, experimental, and less anthemic while still maintaining that English post-punk sound. Most bands that try to pull that off simply can't.







CRACK CLOUD does without it sounding like they are imitating. They have a retro-yet-new approach. I like this so much. They call themselves a mixed media collective. I am very interested in seeing their live show. (CK)
(Deranged)

CRIM – "Pare Nostre Que Esteu A L'Infern" LP

Oi! Oi! Oi! Super *he-a-vv-yy* anthemic Oi! from Spain. Perfect shimmering production, this is basically a commercial for the modern-day European skinhead lifestyle. As you might expect from Pirates Press, this comes on hella color vinyl / foil cover variants, and this copy even includes a flexi disc of the title track as part of the US export edition with lyrics in English. Wow. (GB)
(B-Core Disc / Contra / Pirate Press / Tesla)

CZD – "Communist Boogie" LP

Surfy, RAMONES-y rock that sounds like it was recorded live. There are even song introductions before each song. "V Boj" is a catchy track. It has a repetitive riff which is real cool. The vocals are laidback and almost snarling in a non-threatening way. "Kri" has a classic rock riff with a strange electronic sound effect hiding in the background. It sounds like it is taking the piss out of it. "Autobahn" sounds like they are poking fun at KRAFTWERK. What an odd, wild, cool record. I need a copy. (CK)
(Kulturni Center Maribor)

DATENIGHT – "My Car / You're Hard to Move"

Yes, this is some serious garage punk. This is totally stripped down punk and it's got a little zip to it, but not too fast. It's just enough to get your head bouncing. Perfect. Keep it right there. The guitar has an awesome tinny quality. And the vocals have this cool echo effect, like they were recorded in a big vacant space. The B-side track is even a little eerie. Only 90 copies? That ain't right. (KK)
(Goodbye Boozy)

DEADWITCH – LP

Portland's DEADWITCH bring down a suffering hammer of dismal doom-laden hardcore. Dry, clear screams and cursed chords lock up and release surprising powerviolence blasts and galloping thrash measures, all stewing in feedback and chugging grooves. It's pretty ferocious, reminding me in parts of APARTMENT 213, DESPISE YOU, TRAGEDY, DEVOID OF FAITH, DISSENSION, and ACRID. Dark, spastic, brooding, and fucking pissed. The lyrical content focuses on social frustration and personal strife. Loving the album art: a krampus-nun-hermit with mutant slave. One of them is the dead witch, I presume. (JR)
(No Home)

DEATH LOTTERY – "EP II" EP

Here's something you don't hear much these days...speedy riffaholic garage / trash punk from Florida. A five-track punk EP, they at least *should be* into VOM / ANGRY SAMOANS and WEIRDOS, and maybe even the LEFTOVERS, but who fuckin' knows with kids these days. Needless to say, this thing rips. Also apparently partly inspired by the EAT, as they included a baseball card and period appropriate "Communist Radio" looking labels. Puke colored splatter vinyl with a silkscreened sleeve numbered out of 100 copies. (GB)
(Freetime Boyz)

DEATH RIDGE BOYS – "Right Side of History" LP

I love a good, rockin' Oi! band that's actually saying something substantive and not just telling the same old stories of being tough, drinking with buddies, wearing Fred Perry shirts, and yearning for the good ol' days. In a subgenre that at times has been inundated with ideas of hate and bigotry, DEATH RIDGE BOYS are firmly anti-Nazi. All of the songs are political and reference police brutality, fascism, and other topics. Music-wise, it's driving American Oi! akin to the BRASS. (AJ)
(Rawhead)

DENIM & LEATHER – "Sacred Autism" LP

Mancunian disdain, muscles flexed, vocal chords shredded. Hardcore that alternates between neg-vibe lumbering and rage exorcisms, with a few moody stretches inserted for good measure (very good measure, in fact; see "Ancient Cowboy Burial Ground"). The air of AmRep-informed noise is certainly there, but they utilize only punk measures, leaving the chaff for art-rawk suckers. Mighty licks abound. Punch a hole in the nearest wall. (MC)
(Drunken Sailor)

DESEOS PRIMITIVOS – "Existir" EP

Four tracks blending post-punk sensibilities, street punk gang vocals, darkwave effects, unstoppable songwriting, and some truly charismatic, unsettling vocal performances. Fun and tough at the same time. The four tracks oscillate between creepy and anthemic and Oakland's DESEOS PRIMITIVOS's first vinyl release does not disappoint. Sick cover art is also a bonus here! (HB)
(self-released)

DESTRIPADOS – "Gutless" LP

Probably the tuffest tunes in the rag this month. Portland's rawest drop eight tracks of bombastic Spanish language hardcore. They catch you with the subtleties buried beneath the chaos but you have to pay attention, because they are mostly concerned with howling D-beat and a boot on your neck and it's easy to miss the hooks...but they are there. I like taking well-crafted tracks and blowing them to smithereens, and I like DESTRIPADOS a *lot*. (WN)
(Black Water)

DIRTY WOMBS – "Accursed to Overcome" LP

Fucking wow! It's nothing short of incredible that a three-piece band can make such an enormous sound. (Though the excellent recording certainly helps!) DIRTY WOMBS have been honing their sound for quite a while now, and this is easily their best output yet.

The primary reference point for their sound is the more aggressive, expansive side of Japanese hardcore, but they lean hard into the metal here as well, with a ton of complicated melodic guitar work that recalls countrymen ROTTING CHRIST. The twin lead vocals from bassist Dino and guitarist Kostas are a huge strength for the band, with the vocal lines being just as intricate as the instrumental parts. That being said, when the band lets it rip with a straight-up instrumental ("Renegade's Hymn") it ends up being one of the highlights of the album. The band deserves credit for tight editing as well, as these eight tracks fly by with no fat or padding in evidence. Top-shelf stuff, highly recommended! (AU)
(SPHC)

DRIP FEED / LES FRAPPÉS – split EP

Two Swedish bands share a street punk split here and sadly only one of them is good. DRIP FEED are going for a kind of straightforward OXYMORON / RANCID deal, but their songs just don't cut it. Deeply unmemorable. LES FRAPPÉS offer up a ton more energy and the French language vocals are an unexpected and welcome inclusion. BRAINDANCE are an easy comparison for the punk stuff and even their brief foray into ska territory is pretty fun. Not sure I'd pick this one up, but definitely keep an eye on LES FRAPPÉS—they've got a ton of potential. (AU)
(Elände / Unknown But Not Forgotten)

FASHIONISM – "Smash Singles" LP

This album collects the tracks from four EPs released over the last few years by FASHIONISM. If you've not been paying attention, this is the most recent group featuring one Jeffrey McCloy, previously of the bands TRANZMITORS, NEW TOWN ANIMALS, and several other Jeffie vehicles. Fans will know to expect tightly-wound, upbeat bursts of mod-inflected classic power pop. Jeff's now-signature style revolves around deft arrangements, bright and brittle guitar riffage, and clever, sharp lyrics (mostly reminiscing of better times in the recent past). Great stuff, as expected. (AM)
(Drunken Sailor)

FATTY CAKES AND THE PUFF PASTRIES – LP

I love these Fresno freaks. This, their first LP, was produced by thee ALICE BAG, quite a feat for a relatively obscure queer femme POC band from the bogs of the Central Valley; that alone should tell you something. Catchy, heartfelt, weird, and melodic, this is riot grrrl infused punk that's just as ridiculous as it is deadly serious, fighting the patriarchy one cheeky song at a time. It's the kind of screamy, sassy exuberance about body positivity, food, and femme rage that makes me want to both giggle and fucking thrash. Their song "Grrrl Gang," included on this LP, was also featured on Emotional Response's compilation series *Typical Girls*, which I help curate. These femmes are fucking unicorns. (CR)
(Emotional Response)

FIRST BASE – "Not that Bad" LP

I love a good power pop record. I especially like power pop that doesn't pretend it's tough-guy punk. FIRST BASE has made a power pop record that is heavy on the melodies and, for lack of a better word, is pretty. They're vaguely reminiscent of the YUM-YUMS. These guys know what they are and they own it. Oh no, I see "Judy" on the track list. These guys weren't bold enough to cover the DB'S, were they? Oh, I can't wait. (In fact, it's not a DB'S cover. Maybe I've given them an idea for their next record.) If you're a fan of super-catchy power pop that is pretty and sweet, but not sticky-sweet, this is for you. And it's for me. I am not at all surprised that these guys are Canadian. (KK)
(Drunken Sailor)

FLESH RAG – "Inside Your Mind" LP

Dark psych / garage is the name of game on FLESH RAG's sophomore album. Themes involve mind control, nighttime, graves, blood, etc...Pretty by-the-numbers, but with cool moments sprinkled here and there. For example: "Just One Kiss," which manages to take that STOOGES demo sound, complete with one-note caveman piano, on a hearse-ride through Creepytown. I can't believe I just typed that. Sorry. (MC)
(Loose Lips / Schizophrenic)

FREAK GENES – "Qwak Qwak" LP

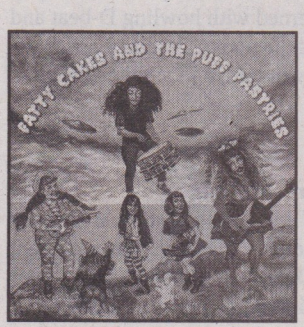
I like this a lot, but it does make me think of listening to a mixtape of someone's 45 collection rather than a cohesive long playing vision. But maybe that's cool? *Messthetics* style bashed out snot with Woolworth's penny sweet rock'n'roll bedroom punkers, sandwiched between lo-fi TUBEWAY ARMY tremble. In places this reminds me of a shoutier TRONICS. There's also a classic early Medway feel too?! Maybe sort of like when that double CD came out a few years back of all the HOMOSEXUALS stuff, different visions from different eras of existence. There is an insane amount of sound ideas on this thing, and when something starts to grate another idea appears shortly thereafter, making this a pleasurable and irritating listen in stops and starts. I dig it. (LG)
(Drunken Sailor)

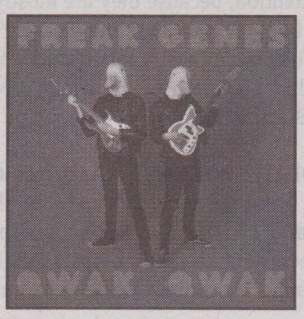
THE FRITZ – LP

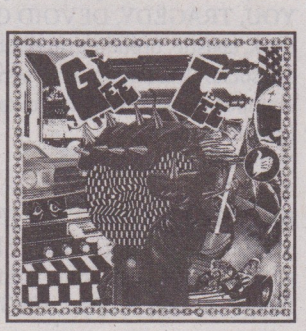
New racket from some Indiana punkos, brethren of a few oft-cited heavies of recent vintage. If you go in expecting twitch and jerk (I'm guilty), you'll catch glass shrapnel immediately. Instead, this smacks of early hardcore à la the MIDDLE CLASS, RHINO 39 or other accelerated classic punk sounds for chemically enhanced teens. A near-trash production stance also scores points with me. Blink-and-it's-done, but they make their points: "*Fuck All The Cops, The President Is An Asshole!*" The kids do not suck. A really cool affirmation of punk's legs. (MC)
(Drunken Sailor)

GEE TEE – LP

GEE TEE comes from Australia's Gold Coast and brings us







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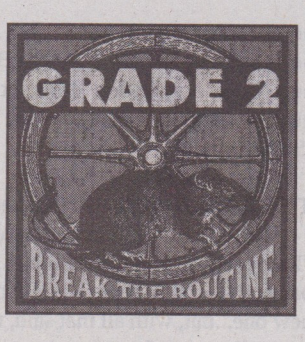


sometimes hectic and sometimes laidback garage punk in the vein of LOST SOUNDS with heavy power pop sensibilities. One person (Kel Mason) is responsible for all the music on here as they incorporate the usual guitar / bass / drums set-up but add flourishes of keyboards. The sound is so raw that GEE TEE avoids sounding like boring indie rock bands who are trying to cop this style, instead passing as an overlooked banger from the Goner back catalog. (GH)
(Goodbye Boozy)

GIUDA – "Get It Over / Kidz Are Back"

Bringing it all back to the beginning, here's a reissue of the 2010 debut single from Rome's favorite purveyors of glitter from the litterbin. You're no doubt familiar with their brand of stomping glam-punk, inspired by record collectors maxed out on *KBD* digging further back in the bins and unearthing the hordes of cheap, disposable singles released in the early part of the seventies by shaggy-haired gorillas inspired by SLADE, the SWEET, and GARY GLITTER. It's a formula that GIUDA captured better than most, prompting some wags to comment that they are to junkshop glam what the HIVES were to authentic garage rock'n'roll. GIUDA manage to take a brief period of somewhat forgotten music history, roundly mocked by serious critics, and inject freshness, energy, and a sense of fun. (AM)
(Got Kinda Lost)

GIUDA – "Number 10 / Crazee"

This is catchy-as-hell, almost glam-like, punky pop music. The handclap is an often underrated touch. Not for these fuckers. They fucking love the handclap. I'm not sure why it took these guys nearly ten years to put this out, but a heartfelt "thank you" to someone for finally getting it done. (KK)
(Got Kinda Lost)

GRADE 2 – "Break the Routine" LP

This band is made up of some very talented British youngsters playing true to form Oi! in the vein of the LAST RESORT, COCKNEY REJECTS, and the 4-SKINS. The title of the record sets the tone for the lyrical content. Seems like these lads are sick of the monotony of bad bars, social media, the music industry, and shitty friends. Look, this record is not reinventing the wheel, and while there's not much that really stands out to me, the band is absolutely authentic, and they write songs so much better than some of their older counterparts. Bands like this are what the Oi! scene needs, not bands that put out great records in their early twenties and follow it up with decades of pure shite. (AJ)
(Demons Runamok / Pirates Press)

GRADE 2 – "Mainstream View" LP

Basic punk. Not Oi! and not really street punk, but probably hoping to appeal to young men who like to wear suspenders with jeans. These guys can probably play their instruments all right, but the way they choose to play their instruments is *very* predictable and simple, pretty much four chords over and over and over again. "Forever Young" or whatever it's called is hard to listen to. I don't know, man, the RAMONES were never this stilted, and even NOFX brings more gusto to the table than you can lick off this record. The 12" itself is pressed on beautiful multi-color vinyl. So there's that. (MR)
(Pirates Press)

GREAT AMERICAN HOUSE FIRE – "Promise Me Endings" 12"

This five song, one-sided record is probably a little more '90s style indie rock than it is twinkly emo from the same era. There is the feel of early VELOCITY GIRL with the big dynamic changes or TSUNAMI, especially since the vocalist sounds a lot like Jenny Toomey. Add to that the feel of those Omaha, NE / Caulfield Records bands that mixed up twinkly sappiness with fuzzed out, plodding choruses. The silkscreen on the B-side is cool but another five songs would have been great. (PA)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

HAGGUS – "Gore, Gore...and More Gore" LP

More vomitus, blood, and guts from this prolific mincecore band out of Oakland, California. This one-sided record delivers the entrails splattered, UNHOLY GRAVE-esque vibes that I'm looking for. I'm talking about, precise, warp speed blasting, mutant grunting and growling, and music symbols crossed the fuck out. This might also have the most disgusting back cover ever. If you're looking for grindcore in its purest form, this one's for you. (BA)
(RSR)

HAIR PULLER – "Old Friend" LP

Heavy and chock full of riffs, while keeping it dissonant, melodic, and pissed. *Old Friends* has its moments, but unfortunately, it just kind of stops there. HAIR PULLER have come up with a recipe on how to write a song, and have just stuck to it, not changing it up much between tracks. However, when they are on they are on, and there are some awesome leads and interesting rhythms but they really make you wait for it. They remind me of KYLESA meets RUN WITH THE HUNTED, with some GOSPEL thrown in for good measure. Favorite tracks are "Long Memory" and "Head Down" which truly showcase HAIR PULLER at their best. (RS)
(Nadine)

HEADLESS DEATH – "A Hideous Warning" LP

Some absolutely ferocious grindcore out of Melbourne, Australia. This band tears it apart, tempering the total blast outs with old school death metal and ripping crust destruction. With most of the songs at about a minute long with not even one second to take a breath, it's a vicious pummeling from beginning to end. Kind of like being thrown into the garbage disposal with last week's rotten leftovers and torn to bloody pieces. If that sounds like your idea of a good time, then check this one out! (BA)
(RSR)

THE HECTOR COLLECTORS – "Remember The Hector Collectors?" LP

This is a fun album of comedy indie pop from a group of Glaswegian chaps with time on their hands and buzzing on Irn Bru. Jangly, upbeat tunes falling somewhere between BIS and HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT and a less fey SPOOK SCHOOL serve as the background to clever, verbose songs casting a sardonic eye on what passes for modern culture. Particular attention is paid to how people conduct themselves online, with message-board misogynists and bullies especially coming under scrutiny on tracks like "Edgelords," "White Knight to F5," and, eh, "Bullies." This is my first exposure to this band despite a catalog going back to 2001, so time to have a dig around... (AM)
(Puzzled Aardvark)

HEXX – "Sacrifice" EP

A blackened maelstrom of grindcore punk. HEXX play loose, rotting, extremely heavy grind with punk riffs, and bitter filthy D-beats. Sort of primitive black metal, sort of a fetid crust punk mess. Not feeling the DARKTHRONE typeface to fill out the lyrics sheet, but definitely feeling the brutal tracks—think HORRID, SADIST, ELECTROCUTIONER, and HUMAN BODIES. A bestial assault with disturbing psych ward / abattoir sounds in the background throughout. Not a moment of warmth on this. (JR)
(RSR)

THE HIVEMINDS – "No Fun No More / Run Away"

This took a second to grow on me, but now it's all over me. As a species, we're fond of labels. I'm no different. This one isn't easy to label, but I'll take a stab at it. I'd call it grinding garage pop. It's got a darkness about it. Maybe it's the deliberate, sort of trudging beat. The vocals also have a haunting quality. Despite the darkness, it's quite catchy and definitely Top 10 material. No pic sleeve on the copy they sent us. (KK)
(Back to Beat)

HOTLIPS MESSIAH – "Disco Miscarriage" 2xLP

This just looks like a bit much for me. I've got the perfect attention span for a 7" record. I can tolerate some LPs. This thing's got 46 tracks. I don't like the artwork. At all. It's got like a triple gatefold sleeve. It looks like there are over 20 guest appearances. I don't like the band pics. Jezus. There is like zero chance that I'm going to like this. Unfortunately, I think I was right. We're a few songs in and I find it all a bit much. The vocals are kinda catchy, but the drummer sounds like he's having a seizure. Or is it the keyboard player who's having a medical emergency? Too much production. Fuck, it's like these guys are going out of their way to annoy me. (KK)
(New Mutanta)

IDAHO GREEN – "Rancher Bones" EP

This is a schizophrenic EP. The first song "Rancher Bones" is a long, heavy rock tune with screeched vocals and an extended stoner instrumental break. Then "Uffdahd" gets a bit garage punk-ish. It's noisy with pleasant vocals, but the screechy guy from the first song pops in occasionally. Finally "Body Language" goes full on English new wave pop with a different sounding vocalist (and no screechy guy). It's a strange combination. (CK)
(Satellite Tribe)

THE ILLITERATES – "Makeout Mountain" LP

With questionable comic book cover art and dumb song titles like "Ramones City," "Blood Bath & Beyonce," and "White Privilege" (best be careful when you're a white male), I was ready to rip these dudes a new one...but, with all that said, the ILLITERATES are *way* better than I initially wanted to give them credit for. *Make Out Mountain* delves into weird DEVO / 100 FLOWERS territory, but in a lazy indie pop way. Their discordant weirdo songs "Svengali," "Mayonnaise Elbow," and "Elementals" are far superior to the more bubblegum pop of "Owl Commander" and "Makeout Mountain." Those ballads give the LP an initial veneer of basic pop punk, but, to the ILLITERATES's credit, there's more going on here than that. (CR)
(Baby Robot)

IMPOTENTIE – "Vije Nummers Tegen De Oorlog" EP

A Canadian *Killed by Hardcore* style band that sings in Flemish, a rudimentary knuckle drag sound with a funny dollar store guitar style that somehow reminds me of REMO VOOR. Members of NODES and OMEGAS. (LG)
(Drunken Sailor)

ISS – LP

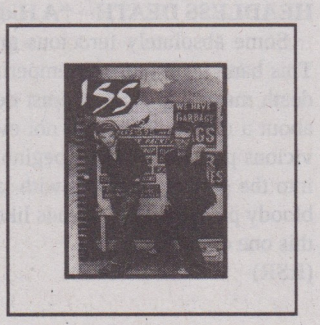
As the debate about what counts as punk here at *MRR* rages on as ever, ISS remain a sterling example of how punk can progress without losing its essential qualities. The sample-based band sounds fresh and innovative but unmistakably *punk*. This reissue of their debut cassette from 2015 doesn't offer any new tracks, but it's great to have these songs on vinyl. The next time someone tries to tell you that punk is dead, or boring, or has no place in 2018, play them this record. (MF)
(Drunken Sailor)

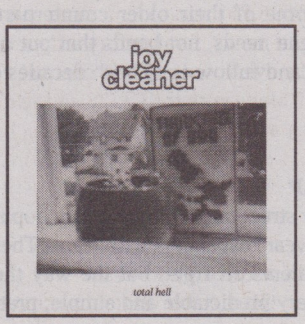
JOY CLEANER – "Total Hell" LP

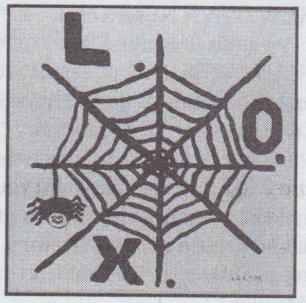
Imagine three dudes that are afraid to drive their guitars too hard but like to sing love songs, vocally harmonize, play mid-tempo pop rock and probably still listen to the first WEEZER record. Is that total hell? For most people that read this magazine, probably. It's not that the songs are poorly performed, they just lack the hooks and the catchy songwriting required to make pop songs listenable more than one time. (PA)
(Jigsaw)

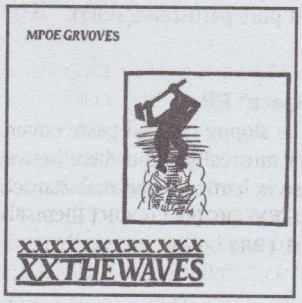
KAKAFONI – "Krälar I Stoftet" LP

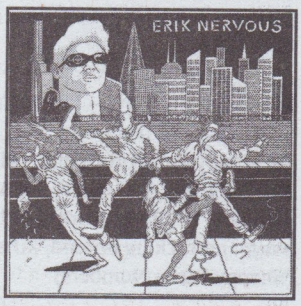
Looks like a ripping Swedish D-beat record, sounds like a ripping Swedish D-beat record. Along the likes of MAKABERT FYND and the like, raw shit delivered with a tortured clean intensity instead of walls











of distortion. So damn good. (WN)
(Anomie / Phobia / Up The Punx / Urinal Vinyl)

KOB 82 – "1982 in 2018" 10"

Punk. Like with mohawks and studded vests and shit. Hints of '80s Brazilian hardcore lingering in the shadows, but don't expect the second coming of OHLO SECO here—just rough and tumble street punk from São Paulo with a coupla straight burners ("Reppressão Political" is the record's highlight) keeping the casual listener honest. (WN)
(Gruesse Asu Der Muelltonne / Lixo)

KOB 82 – "Propaganda Pelo Ato" LP

Brazilian hardcore punk with a capital P! Stylistically, the band embraces both raw D-beat à la DESASTRE or NEUROSE URBANA and a more melodic, pogo-friendly punk attack like CÓLERA. They're competent at both but the more tuneful songs ("Eterna Geracao," "Mudar Pra Melhor") are the standouts. The vocalist is impressive, equally adept at clean singing and hardcore shouting, bringing a ton of energy to every performance. The drummer deserves a shout as well, switching effortlessly between D-beats and tupa-tupa swing, with super tight fills throughout, always creative without ever overplaying his parts. There are a few too many songs in the mix that drag a bit to call it a really great record, but the good stuff is really fuckin' good. The record closes with a ripping BROKEN BONES / DISCHARGE medley. I don't know if I've ever encountered the like before, but it's pretty cool, and the guitarist can actually handle the solos! (AU)
(Gruesse Asu Der Muelltonne)

KOVAA RASVAA – 12"

Eleven tracks of brutal and unrelenting hardcore from Finland's KOVAA RASVAA. The record plays at 45 RPM and is the same on both sides. Everything about this rules. The vocals and breakdowns remind me of HARUM SCARUM, and the fast parts are thrashy, fierce, and tight as fuck. The guitar progressions hint at metal influences that add an epic sensibility and keep the songs dynamic and exciting. (HB)
(Svart)

KÜKEN – LP

The second LP from Hamburg's KÜKEN rips, but it came out in mid 2017. Why are we just getting it now? Straightforward power poppish punk with hooks to spare in every song. They channel the energy of that first JAY REATARD LP along with the REDS and HIGH TENSION WIRES. None of the songs are over two minutes, which is always welcome for this style of punk, as far as I'm concerned. Direct, energetic, and to the point. (GH)
(Drunken Sailor)

THE LAST ROUGH CAUSE – "The Violent Few" EP

Reissue of the first EP from this Oi! combo outta Darlington, England that might as well have stayed lost in history. The four tracks here have none of the bite of BLITZ, none of the catchiness of COCK SPARRER...About as exciting as sitting through a church service. Why bother? (JD)
(Godwill / No Plan)

LOESCHEN – LP

Pretty straightforward punk that has an interesting post-punk guitar feel thrown in, but overall is just TRAGEDY worship. This record just kind of feels like the same song over, and over again, which feels uninspired to me. They are probably fun live, but this LP doesn't really do much. I just wish they fucked with different tempos, or some sort of break from their norm. The song "Raus" is dope and I wish they did more tracks like this. (RS)
(Ab Fall / Rinderherz)

L.O.X. – "L.O.X. Time" LP

Assuming I'm understanding the particulars correctly, L.O.X. is a Portland, OR micro-scene collaboration, taking members from WOOLEN MEN, HONEY BUCKET, and MOPE GROOVES, centered on swift / free DIY spontaneity. There are angles here that are familiar—Flying Nun pop, somber post-punk, lite-psych stretching—but the band quite effectively charts their own path, with unique perspectives song-to-song. It actually comes across as advertised: "an exploded view... arranged collaboratively / spontaneously." I'm finding it hard to single out a particular moment, as it all works so well. "Mind Like A Brick" very nearly manages the same brand of agitated hypnosis that a late-nite headphone deep-dive into *The Faust Tapes* would. That's not to say this is an exercise entirely devoid of groove or claws—it's all there and you cling to it throughout. A wonderful outta-nowhere album, engaging and inspiring front-to-back. (MC)
(See My Friends)

MAKABERT FYND – "Systemkollaps...?" LP

This incredibly prolific Swedish all-star band returns with their fifth LP since 2009, offering up twelve tracks of crusty punk with a bit more metal in the mix than their earlier efforts. Poffen remains one of the very best vocalists in hardcore, and as always it's a pleasure to hear him perform. Unfortunately, while the tunes are solid, good even, there aren't really memorable tracks to be found. The tempos are pretty uniform, and there's hardly a hook or riff that really catches the ear. "Ledarclown," with its raging solo and vicious chorus, is the standout track by far. Fans will definitely not be let down, but it's far from the band's best work. (AU)
(Anomie / Dark Elk / Mangel Wax / Phobia / Up the Punx)

MAMA – "Eye in the Sky" EP

MAMA has been in the game for a hot minute now, and unlike many of these bands that seem to jumping on the glam / power pop train these days, MAMA does it completely right. The band really sounds like it just stepped out of a time machine from 1976 to throw hot licks in your face. You like GOLDEN EARRING, THIN LIZZY, and CHEAP

TRICK? You'll like this. Four songs of pure perfection. (GH)
(Got Kinda Lost)

MODERN GOON – "This Empty Space" EP

This record feels very '90s, from the sloppy cut and paste cover to the sloppy hardcore sounds within. It's musically somewhere between POISON IDEA / BORN AGAINST style hardcore and emo-hardcore of bands from the same era like PARTY OF HELICOPTERS. Four songs, no fucking around, killer record. (PA)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

MOPE GROOVES – "The Waves" LP

Playful yet desperate scattershot melancholic pop visions that remind me of 1980s tape trader sounds or something Shimmydisc woulda put out...The sound of something someone somehow *had* to make in order to exist, ramshackle drums, kaleidoscope keyboard incantations, shards of guitar as rhythm instrument with those melancholic hazy vocals that fall somewhere between a blurry C86 pop dream fanzine writer and DANIEL JOHNSTON. Bedroom pop soundtracks for our desperate existences. (LG)
(self-released)

NEO NEOS / ERIK NERVOUS – split EP

An excellent new EP from two great bands. It's synthy, pogo-ing fun. I like that skronky sax conclusion on ERIK NERVOUS's "Connie Can't Stand It." NEO NEOS are more rough and lo-fi. The vocals are bratty and fun. The music blasts at 100mph. Their "Hüsker Dü?" is my new favorite song. Cool stuff. (CK)
(Goodbye Boozy)

NEUROTIC FICTION – "Pulp Music" LP

Cool English band that make me think of classic era '80s / '90s Homestead records with added PRETENDERS! For real! The guitars particularly have a sort of snotty reverence to rock'n'roll, the New Wave drag—maybe they were aiming for GUN CLUB or even LINK WRAY? The different parts of the band are so disparate from each other, like this isn't a rockarolla New Wave record at all, it really reminds me of the AUTOCLAVE 10" on Dischord, the way you can tell different influences and elements are present but there's a distinct band idea / identity in the way they interject their post-punk / New Wave ideas into their own context rather than making a perfect reenactment of a sound or genre. The vocalist is really charismatic, she has a great voice, and the lyrics are smart and radical and oblique all at once. (LG)
(Specialist Subject)

NEW BERLIN – "Quarantine / Teenage Werewolf"

Two kinda sleepy tracks from this Texas band. "Quarantine" tries to come off as an anxious rocker, but it feels like they took some Xanax before recording, making it pretty uneffective. The CRAMPS cover is *fine*, but not necessary in 2018. A pretty disposable one-sided 7". (JD)
(Goodbye Boozy)

NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – "Elephant Demos" LP

Well this is exciting! Some of the earliest recordings of NEWTOWN NEUROTICS, a set of demos recorded in 1980, getting a vinyl release for the first time. Enjoy early versions of future classics like "When The Oil Runs Out," "No Sanctuary," and "Mindless Violence," as well as some tracks that haven't seen the light of day until now. Those in the know will jump at this, and if you aren't already clued in, think driving, melodic, catchy punk rock in the vein of STIFF LITTLE FINGERS paired with, in Steve Drewett, one of the smartest, most relatable political lyricists '80s punk produced. (AM)
(No Plan)

NIXON NOW – "The Now Sound" LP

These dudes have listed to more than one STOOGES record in their time. From the vocals to the fancy lead guitar work, this has IGGY POP written all over it. Catchy and mid-tempo, with a pounding beat, I'm not sure there is much more to say, except that it's an excellent record from start to finish. Seriously—great songwriting, production, this has it all. (KK)
(Elektrohasch)

NO BLUES – "A Collection of Love Songs" LP

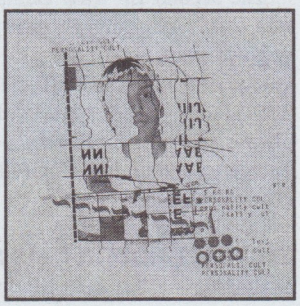
Everything I've ever read about Hamilton, Ontario's NO BLUES has compared them to TENEMENT and MARKED MEN, which is something I can't really argue with, but I would mostly limit that comparison to the early, power pop years of the former. NO BLUES in energetic and tuneful, incorporating a masterful ear for melody in each of their fifteen songs. The incredibly raw recording quality lends a scrappy charm to the LP that cannot be denied. Even though this record collects a tape, two EPs, and some unreleased songs, the whole thing feels cohesive and like a complete LP. It's limited to 100 copies and features some of the most budget-ass art I've ever seen... like something that would come free with a box of detergent. Still, great record. (GH)
(Schizophrenic)

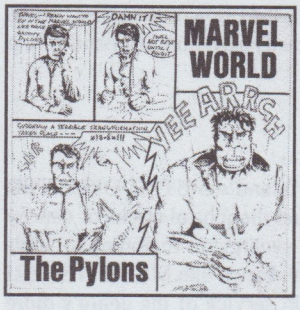
NOI!SE – "Mass Apathy" 12" EP

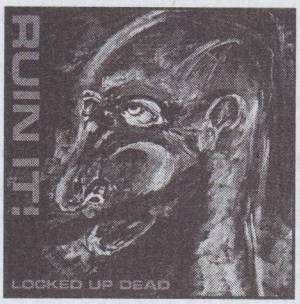
So, the elephant in the room is the presentation. This is a one-song 12" record with bullets die-cut into the vinyl! Looks fucking amazing, like a lot of Pirates Press experiments / special projects. I don't know if any one song can live up to the packaging, but this is a good one, a speedy street punk rant about the madness of America's gun culture and the toll it takes in children's lives with a cool central bass line, along the lines of the harder-edges ANTI-HEROS material. Obviously, this is a bit of a novelty, but it's a pretty great song. (AU)
(Pirates Press)

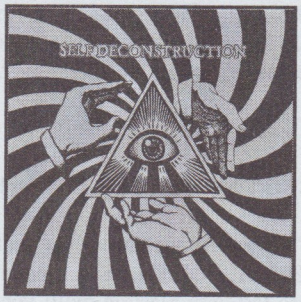
OND TRO – "Støv" LP

After a few listens it's a grower. This Danish trio plays mostly mid-tempo, highly aggressive punk, but the reverb and overall harshness and some production values keep making me think of black metal...it kind of doesn't make sense cuz this ain't metal at all. Is it the wild and









agitated vocal style? Is it the hollow reverb in the guitar? Some songs remind me of *Ass Cobra* era TURBONEGRO (minus the schtick). The songs are generally short and direct. Weirdly none of my comparisons really do them justice and the record is a lot better than the picture I'm painting. The darkness and mystery are both confounding and enhancing. (MA)
(Travesty Music)

ORUÃ – "Sem Bênção/Sem Crença" 2xLP

This is truly an epic, or maybe just long-winded, psychedelic indie rock journey. This sounds like, and may very well be, one person's bedroom project that they got their friends to play on. The first record has some cool, lo-fi, indie rock tunes that have a BUILT TO SPILL feel. They stumble along from lounge music gone wrong to fuzzed-out rock meandering with falsetto vocals and timing that doesn't always sound right but still works. Unfortunately, the second record doesn't impress so much. It's more instrumental and it becomes tedious, sounding like JANE'S ADDICTION at times. You would have had me with a single LP. (PA)
(IFB / Transfusão Noise)

PERSHING BOYS – "Zuviel Hoffnung" LP

Catchy German shits in the classic Deutschpunk vein, amped up appropriately for the new millennium. *Zuviel Hoffnung* is full of potential classics, and I'm sure even more so for those who *sprechen*, with leads and hooks galore all delivered with a subtly dark edge. Recommended for future listens. (WN)
(Rinderherz)

PERSONALITY CULT – LP

Here we have ten tight, well-crafted poppy punk songs. Catchy and tuneful without being too saccharine, there's a rough-around-the edges quality that lifts this out of the pop punk puddle. While stylistically rooted in the past (BUZZCOCKS, RAMONES) this group has a distinctly contemporary sound that puts them in the same wheelhouse as MARKED MEN or the SPITS: pop that will sink both hooks and teeth into you and shake 'til you don't want it to let go. (AM)
(Drunken Sailor)

PIG DNA – "Strong Throat / A.U.A.H."

Oakland's coolest posthumously release a final blast of end times inferno bleakness, true and total chaos sound for those looking for noise not music beyond the shoestring cliché. There are so many that aim for this only to produce character free bleats, wasted product in a consume or be consumed society. PIG DNA casually destroy with totality, demonstrating DIY or DIE or both. If you haven't already gotten their other records I would advise it... (LG)
(Square One)

PISSE – "Hornhaut Ist Der Best Handschuh" EP

Fast punk with bleep-bloop elements and angry shouted German vocals. I don't hate it! I can't tell if "Rolling Stone" is a totally fucked cover of BOB DYLAN's "Like a Rolling Stone" or just steals a line or two, and I'm kind of into that confusion. The title of the EP translates to either "cornea is the best glove" or "horny skin is the best glove," which is a relief either way because from the cover art I thought it was going to be something about fucking a fish. (MF)
(Phantom)

PUHELINSEKSI – "Meillä On Ikävä Kaikkea" 12"

Originally released as a small run cassette in 2016, PUHELINSEKSI get the vinyl treatment for their seven-song debut. The band has a heavy guitar-based melodic sound that feels like equal parts LEATHERFACE (in guitars only), TERRIBLE FEELINGS (first EP only), and garage-pop. Male and female vocals share every word of every song, sung in tuneful Finnish and each song has hooks that are instantly catchy. My complaint is that the two singers never play off of each other: no call and response, no interplaying harmonies. They just sing the same thing together all the time throughout every song. Still, it's good and the songs are strong enough to shine through that, but vocal interplay would really add a different and cool dynamic to this. That said, great record. (GH)
(Svart)

THE PYLONS – "Marvel World" EP

Oh yeeeah...thaaat's what this is. HQ reissue of a hella obscure UK '70s pop punker (1980 to be exact). In the scheme of rediscoveries, this one was a bit of a latecomer, only appearing on Volume 10, count 'em *ten*!, of *Powerpearls* circa 2003, mainly because it was rare as hell and never turned up. There's even a giga-rare fold-out picture sleeve variant that commands megabucks. But I've only ever encountered the normal cartoon picture sleeve version (reconstructed here) a scant handful of times. Too bad, as this one's a killer, a two-sider at that, if you can deal with the more midtempo B-side. The A-side is a real corker of a pop punker, and who could beat a Marvel Comics theme! (GB)
(Queen Mum)

ROMSKIP – "Ting Betyr Ingenting" EP

A new group from Bergen, Norway, singing in their native language. "Siste Sjansen," or "The Last Chance" as I'm led to believe, lopes at a lackadaisical tempo through a '60s garage romp—which, despite the pace, is played with a fevered intensity and elevated by the gang vocal chorus. "Lei," or "Fed Up," picks up the energy but there's something about the cleanliness of the production that sands off any rough edge this track could have had. Once again it's the vocals that lift this one out of the doldrums too. Overall an interesting-sounding record. (AM)
(Back To Beat)

RUIN IT! – "Locked Up Dead" LP

The teaser sticker from Armageddon says "Cut from the same musical cloth as: OUT COLD, BOSTON STRANGLER, TEAR IT UP, 9 SHOCKS TERROR" and a couple of other bands...and, well...I hate to be a lazy bones, but I feel like it's fukkn 2003 all over again,

and I love it. Nasty hardcore stripped bare, it's simple, it's great, and there's pure fire in the vocals. RUIN IT! are tough as nails without the pretension, just punching you in the face over and over and over... (WN)
(Armageddon Label)

SELF DECONSTRUCTION / SPEED!! NOISE!! HELL!! – split LP

Oh come on you fukks—does it get any more chaotic or more awesome? I think not. Kochi City's SPEED!! NOISE!! HELL!! on one side with blown-out and wild Japanese fastcore: blasting multi-vocal mania with an occasional tongue in cheek breakdown, this is what made the early '90s Japanese wave of rippers so great, and they carry the legacy with pride. SELF DECONSTRUCTION are a pure vicious grind trio, no bullshit. BENÜMB and CAPITALIST CASUALTIES covers to give you context, with fifteen originals to lay you flat...and Kubine's vocals are fukkn deadly. (WN)
(RSR)

SERQET – "Oleander"

The first track, "Oleander" is stoic, slow, and otherwordly, incorporating unusual elements like a recorder (the woodwind instrument, not some kind of high tech machine) and organ synth tones. Deep, patient, and velvety vocals blend effortlessly among the instruments. Then, halfway through the track, it breaks out into a dancefloor-ready goth eruption. I can't say I saw that coming, but it's a welcome surprise. The second track, "Lullaby," is a gentle and uplifting new wave dreamscape. High production value and nuanced songwriting make this record sound like it could have been an '80s classic we somehow missed. (HB)
(Vinyl Conflict)

SEX TOURISTS – LP

Electronic, programmed instruments back up the stoic singer of this outfit from Sydney. The overall sound is a blend of bleak and meandering new wave, and uplifting synth-pop. The vocals sometimes take on a MORRISSEY-like arrhythmic approach, but at other times stick to a script. The beats also incorporate synthwave retro-nostalgia tones and rhythms. Sampled or reconstructed sound effects from '80s video games have the potential to be a bit cheesy, but SEX TOURISTS seem to use them for good and not evil. (HB)
(Paradise Daily)

SHITTY LIFE – "Switch Off Your Head" LP

Parma's SHITTY LIFE returns with an urgent jangly punkness that immediately made me think of REGULATIONS. Snotty vocals and lightly overdriven guitars touch the red just enough for an under-control blowout, while the bass player sneaks in the catchiest bits. Recurring themes of mass surveillance, feeling worthless or inferior, and sleep deprivation. "Retard" isn't the best song title choice, but after considering the lyrics I'm forgiving them and chalking it up to ESL. While there isn't anything we've never heard before, this album has the sound of a hard working, well-practiced, intentional band that can be enjoyed by practically any punk. I can easily envision this band ruling all the hot Euro fests next year. (MA)
(Spastic Fantastic)

SISTER DISASTER – "Away" LP

With their first full-length release, Finland's SISTER DISASTER offer up twelve unbelievably beautiful and thoughtful tracks of dancey goth music. The guitar and bass build synergistic melodies in ways we've seen in Scandinavian melodic punk bands like MASSHYSTERI or GORILLA ANGREB, but this time in service of the genre's more somber, goth cousin. The guitar effects sound like a synth at times, and the drums explore post-punk inspired dance rhythms. The singer's voice sounds like an understated version of the GO-GO'S's Belinda Carlisle. The songs are full of haunting melodies and minimalist but hypnotic guitar riffs. Recommended! (HB)
(Several Casualties / Teen Wolf)

THE SLEEPERS – "Angel In a Raincoat" EP

I mail-ordered this earlier in the year and the title track has become a household favorite. It's one of those sleeveless UK punk bonzers that earned notoriety through collector talk, and it certainly rises to the top among those leaning toward power pop (which is not usually me). All four tracks are hits, each having a bit of a different vibe, not unlike the way BUZZCOCKS (R.I.P. Pete!) did it. If you have any interest in anything *KBD* / *Bloodstains* / *Powerpearls*, or just classic punk you're gonna need to track down this fantastic EP, as it's now housed in a nice pic sleeve with an insert and can finally be had for less than $100. (MA)
(Queen Mum)

SLUMB PARTY – "Happy Now" LP

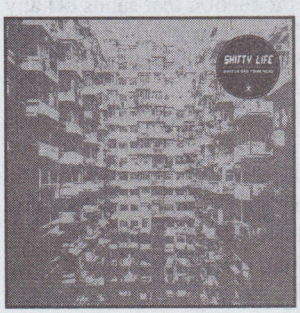
Hyperactive poppy punk with a skronky sax that gives it a tinge of ska styling. The rhythms are jerky-jerky and frantic in a funky, no-wave way. The songs keep going at full speed while the vocalist barks at you. It's exhausting. And it's catchy. Plus the LP is on pretty, clear vinyl. (CK)
(Drunken Sailor)

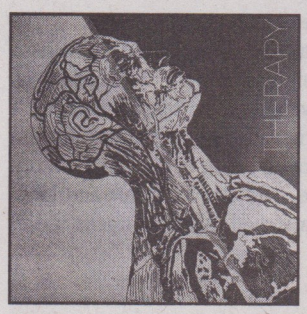
CRUZ SOMERS – "Sit and Stare" EP

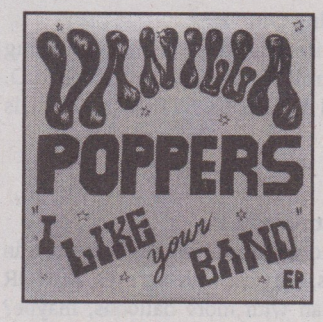
CRUZ SOMERS plays home-recorded, drum machine-style, basement punk in the vein of UROCHROMES (but less weird), KID CHROME, and maybe even SICK THOUGHTS. The guitars are right up front and the drum machine is playing 16th notes so fast that it would make Marky Ramone's head spin (even though he cheats). Aggressive and energetic, it sounds like all the best parts of an intense coffee buzz. Four songs, no filler. (GH)
(Goodbye Boozy)

SPIRITUAL CRAMP – "Television" LP

Definitely a solid release for fans of TALKING HEADS who also like to mosh. The record features six new jams as well as all the tracks







off their first two EPs, so if you're just getting into this band it's worth your money to cop this release. The new songs are a bit catchier than the old stuff, and a little less gritty. Still, it's punk as hell, driving, and hella Bay Area. The whole thing fits together really well and feels like being stoned on a rainy day. (AJ)
(Deranged)

SPITTING NAILS – "Underwhelming Goodness" LP

Blackened post-hardcore out of Hamburg, Germany. Now, black metal-inspired post-hardcore might sound terrible to some (myself included) but the results here are actually not so bad. It's as if they took all the evil antics out of black metal's gritty harmonic dissidence and replaced it with some good old punk invective. Throw in some lurching build-ups, pummeling breakdowns, and lyrics ripping up our capitalist excess and you've got a winner! (BA)
(Flower Violence / Potato / Rinderherz / Tanker / Totalpunk)

SPRAY PAINT & THE REBEL – "Charles And Roy's Purple Wang" 12"

Not a split, but a collaboration forged during a joint European jaunt. Why? Why not? The REBEL is Ben from COUNTRY TEASERS infamy. You oughta know that. SPRAY PAINT are terse Texans, often queasy and punkily abrupt. I hesitate to characterize this as the REBEL fronting SPRAY PAINT (even though that's precisely what this is), as equal weight is pulled throughout: Ben's provocations and chuckle-stabs provide bite and SPRAY PAINT shine by supplying wiry unease. It works better than I imagined it would...neither is too heavy-handed, so the pairing actually sounds natural. Fandom aside, I assume the tune "Mitch, Mitch, Mitch (Huntsman Reaction)" is what prompted this making its way into my review pile, which is fine. One guess as to what the REBEL rhymes "Mitch" with. A snack-sized sampling of their respective powers, but definitely a cool and caustic puree. (MC)
(ever/never)

STRAIGHT ARROWS – "21st Century / Cyberbully (Version – featuring DJ Soup & King OPP)"

This is super catchy garage rock nouveaux. "21st Century" has excellent vocals and lyrics backed by hard hitting drums and fuzzy guitars. The B-side is a remix of the A-side that extends the song and gives it a Madchester feel. It would have been perfect for late night dancing at the Factory. (CK)
(Goodbye Boozy)

SUEDEHEAD – "Constant Frantic Motion" LP+7"

Ex-punks try to play northern soul and end up channeling ELVIS COSTELLO. For the most part it is super clean and pretty inoffensive pop / mod rock with plenty of horns and keyboards. Inoffensive until the B-side of the 7". Sure, some really bad bands have done covers of "Waiting Room," but this one rivals the RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS for shittiest version. Then they have the nerve to follow it up with an embarrassing cover of "Gimme Some Lovin'." This is a punk magazine. Right? (PA)
(Pirates Press / Simba)

SWEET SUBURBIA – "Paranoia Day By Day" LP

Listening to this record is like being punched in the face with a positive attitude. At times channeling the energy of COCK SPARRER or EXPLODING HEARTS, the lead guitar player indulges in screamin' rock'n'roll solo after screamin' rock'n'roll solo. The vocals are a little raspy like the singer of OXYMORON, and enthusiastic without being overacted. The songs are based around simple, one-four-five chord progressions in the best way possible. SWEET SUBURBIA strikes a perfect balance, melodic in a way that will appeal to Oi! fans, and outrageous and fun in a way sure to be irresistible to people who lean toward snotty garage or pop punk. (HB)
(Grüße aus der Mülltonne)

TACHANKA – "Vengeance de Classe" EP

Is "sensitive Oi!" a thing? I don't understand French but this shit is somber, with lots of open chords and a decidedly crawling pace. Hailing from Brest, I'm predicting TACHANKA may share members (or at least inspiration) with locals like LITOVSK and SYNDROME 81. There's a similar spirit but an unparalleled desperation, sort of like the lighter TEMPLARS material. So simple and so heavy-hearted. Four rather slow but burning, gruff singalongs for brooding skins and punx. (MA)
(Mendeku Diskak)

THERAPY – LP

Screeching D-beat thrashcore from San Diego. Wild experimental post-punk sonic landscapes fill in behind the surface of hardcore songs. The riveting drums have a strong momentum, while the riffs are hardcore punk, often breaking into echoing solos with a psychedelic bounce that is subtly underplayed within a familiar recipe. An all go, no slow debut with an inferno of powerful scathing vocals. I suspect THERAPY would absolutely scorch live. Side B is an etching of a medical drawing of a face. Raw stuff with awesome production effects that make it something quite special. (JR)
(Volar)

THROAT – "Bareback" LP

New full-length from this long standing Finnish doomy / sludge / punk outfit. Kinda hard to place, I get hella Hydrahead CONVERGE / ISIS vibes from it all, especially the cover art, but then they have these crazy (heavy) tuneful songs / parts that are almost like MUDHONEY or HELMET. Probably more "post-hardcore" than anything I can think of, it's super all over the map with total unexpected left turns and even experimental dark ambient parts. I don't really mess with this sound, but maybe if more bands were pushing the limits like this I would. Cool record. (GB)
(Svart)

TV CRIME – "Clocking In / Clocking Out" EP

Nottingham rockers offer tight riffs and dignified vox, making for a proper British grimey rock'n'roll rip of ELVIS COSTELLO. I love both grimey rock'n'roll and ELVIS COSTELLO, so all is good. (CR)
(Drunken Sailor)

TWIN PIGS – "Scandinavian Nightmare" LP

Here's a quick catalog of the band members' tattoos I can see in photos: BLACK FLAG bars, balloons, kitty cat with big eyes, MINOR THREAT sheep, um, a young woman with more balloons, maybe? Anyway, this record pretty much sounds like that, but with FILTH-style throat-shredding screechers. Somewhat moderne. I wish the lyrics were in Swedish, because I think it would have made everything 12% cooler, but they're not. Solid record. (MR)
(Luftslott)

U-NIX – "Nuke Portland" LP

Blistering and manic sounds from the land of soy curls, brew pubs, and camping-gear-brand clothing. NEOS and KORO style speed and trickery with DIE KREUZEN's snarl and rhythmic prowess. Unhinged vocals remind me of the FARTZ / ACCUSED guy. The collage-style art suits the mocking, smartass vibe, and the insert looks like it could have been assembled via a few issues of *Craphound*. Eight blasts in ten minutes and as you may have guessed from the band comparisons, it rips. (MA)
(Feel It)

VANILLA POPPERS – "I Like Your Band" EP

This quartet put out one of my favorite records of 2017, and they've just outdone themselves again with their new outing. Featuring a more blown-out mix, *I Like Your Band* arguably conveys the frenetic energy of the band better than any of their other recordings. This is doubly impressive if you consider that, perhaps due to their move from Cleveland to Australia, the guitarist doubles on drums here. Like a feral dog snapping at passers-by, the band and vocalist Christina Pap are hungry and pissed off as hell. The lyrics match the energy pretty well too: "*You're so boring / You're so fake / You think you're so good / I don't care what you have to say.*" Get it. (JD)
(Drunken Sailor / Feel It)

VIETCONG 68 – "A B" LP

This kind of punk'n'roll rarely does anything for me. Rock-influenced punk with tried and true chord progressions that have been used to much better effect since the early 1950s, alongside some CLASH influence and a small bit of Oi! They're from the Basque Country and sometimes they wear the conical farmer's hat that is primarily utilized in Southeast Asia when they play live. I'm not even ready to open that can of worms. (GH)
(Tough Ain't Enough)

VIOLENCE CREEPS – "Ease The Seed Bag..." EP

The only thing predictable about a new VIOLENCE CREEPS record is that it will be awesome. I haven't seen these Oakland freaks in the flesh for over a year, and while I've always enjoyed them I don't remember their songs having so many meandering stupid little hooks. They boldly open with a SOFT CELL cover, but of course knock it out of the park in their own destructo style. The sleeve, insert and label art aesthetics all look thoughtfully mismatched. All four tracks worth many slogs through. (MA)
(Drunken Sailor)

VIOLENT SPIRIT – "Human Pain" 12" EP

Fuck y'all, this is a rager! Blazing GISM / ZOUO-inspired metallic hardcore from Finland equipped with crazy good guitar leads and super-tight songwriting. The guitar pyrotechnics occasionally edge over into thrash metal territory, but the solid 1-2 drumming and growled vocals keep things firmly rooted in punk. Solid lyrics dwell on the horrors of life, fighting Nazis, and, surprisingly, preserving the environment. This might be the best Japanese-influenced hardcore out of Finland since SELFISH! Super fucking impressive work. (AU)
(Hardware)

THE WHIFFS – "Take a Whiff!" LP

Apparently punk is still alive in Kansas City. Not sure what it is, but even though we just lived through a decade of endless lo-fi pop punk bubblegum knock-offs, something sounds super fresh and timeless here despite the tired territory. The full-bodied production sure does help, but it's the stellar songwriting that really shines through. A modern day *Powerpearls* just bleeding with sincerity, with eight tracks and not one stinker. (GB)
(Drunken Sailor)

YOUR PEST BAND – "Automatic Aspiration" 12"

This EP is not the rough, up-tempo pop punk of this Japanese group's earlier years but more of a mid-tempo rock thing. Catchy power pop songs like "Something Wrong" mix with scuzzy rock'n'roll riffs and just a hint of pop punk. While they surprisingly do a pretty good job of being all over the map here, the real winner is the title track. At its base it is a pretty simple, up-tempo, bouncy, catchy, poppy punk tune but the addition of some quirky noise in the chorus gives it that little extra *je ne sais quoi*. (PA)
(Dirt Cult / Snuffy Smiles)

ZETA – "Magia Infinita" LP

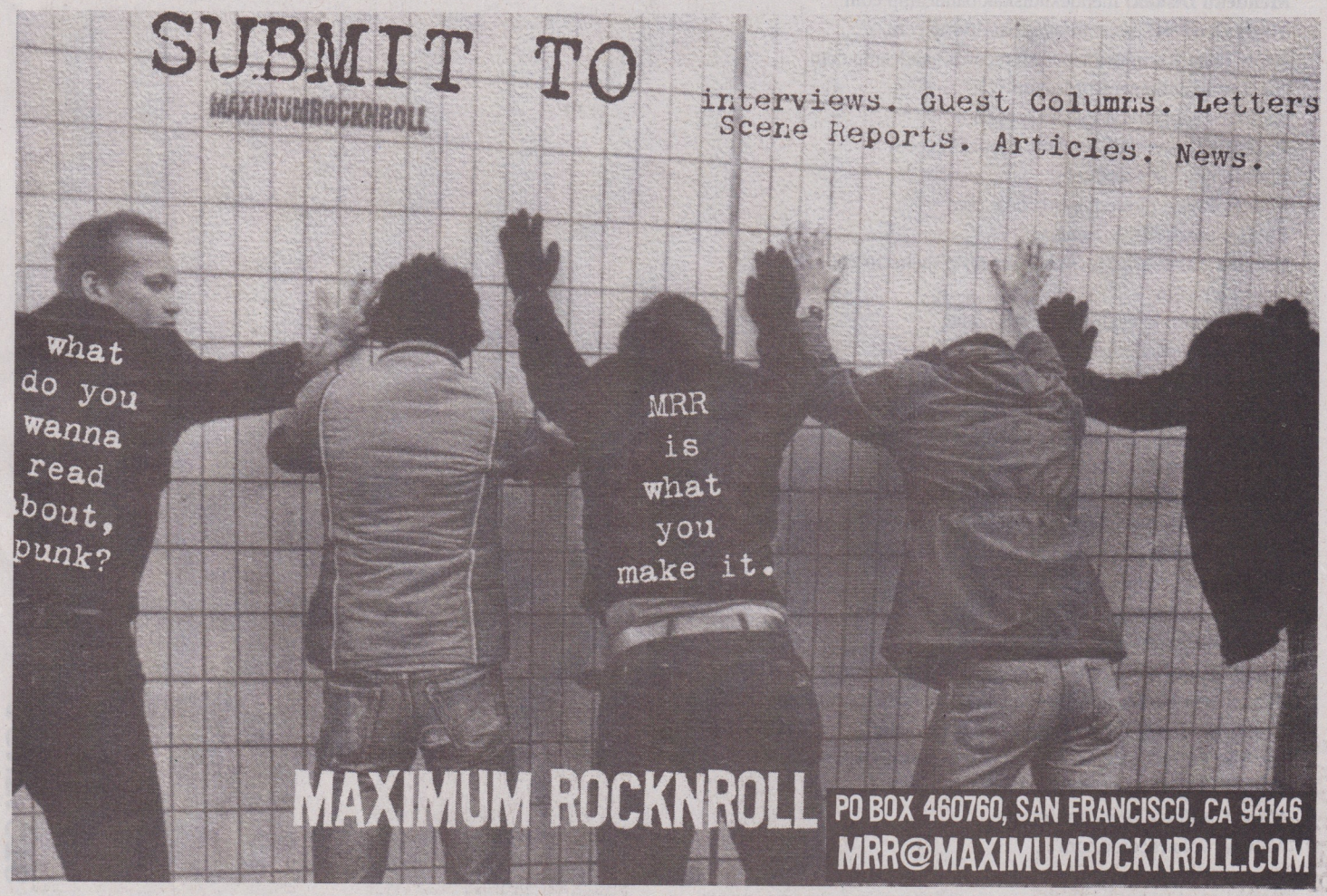
Where do you begin with a band like ZETA? They're a band that covers so much ground in one LP that pinpointing them to one genre is extremely difficult. ZETA moves from chaotic hardcore, to ambience, to polyrhythmic drums within what feels like a matter of seconds. While this record feels like chaos, there truly is not one harsh note on this record. ZETA have figured out exactly how to create a record that only speaks in melodies. The production is ridiculous, with the drums

RECORDS

sounding huge, guitars sitting pretty up front, and a thick bass below it all. *Maga Infinita* feels like one long groove that is infused with pop-like interludes and cumbia-inspired rhythms. It is just a math equation that none of us will ever be able to solve; all we can do is sit back, take it in, and appreciate it. Damn. Not to mention the beautiful artwork and packaging! (RS)
(IFB)

V/A – "Raise Your Voice Joyce: Contemporary Shouts From Contemporary Voices" LP

I was perplexed and enthralled by this LP, which looks like a pseudo-authentic UK82 comp but is actually a reimagined take on tales and memories of women's resistance throughout history. What emerges is a well crafted mix of different styles of punk, criss-crossing from goth, anarcho, DIY, and UK82, and featuring members of bands like BB AND THE BLIPS, GOOD THROB, ARMS RACE, SAUNA YOUTH, NEKRA, SUBDUED, and TERRIBLE FEELINGS. The comp starts off with a certified ripper from Bryony Beynon called "Black Cardigans," and Manuela Iwansson's haunting voice revels in "In Carnation." You'll be hooked. FUCKED UP has a new single, "Raise Your Voice Joyce," which is not featured on this comp, yet somehow tethered to it. A winning riff on activism and women's struggle for justice and visibility. (CR)
(Static Shock)



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RATIONS NOISE & UNKNOWN RIVER DRIVER split LP/CS/DL

UNKNOWN RIVER DRIVER is a post-hardcore band par excellence. Created under the influence of JAWBREAKER, (YOUNG) PIONEERS, POLVO, DRIVE LIKE JEHU, BUILT TO SPILL, NATIVE NOD, and more. Members of RATIONS, FELLOW PROJECT, and BRIDGE AND TUNNEL.

RATIONS NOISE delivers a remixed collage of sonic bits taken from RATIONS' studio, practice, and live recordings and combines them with terrifying text-to-speech exploring the effects of the US drone war from the following perspectives: Those being bombed, those doing the bombing, those trying to stop it, and those of us whose taxes pay for the bombs. Members of RATIONS, SMALL ARMS DEALER, WAX PHANTOM.

LP packaged in uncoated jackets, inners, and obi, all printed both sides. **Cassettes include** full artwork housed in chipboard "bradpak".

Mastered by Carl Saff. **Artwork** by Wells.

Split 12" LP: 86'd Records, Different Kitchen (UK), Ersatz Reality (DE), Farsot Records (SE), Rad Girlfriend, Tor Johnson. **Split Cassette**: Lost Cat Records, No Time Records. **Download:** 86drec.bandcamp.com

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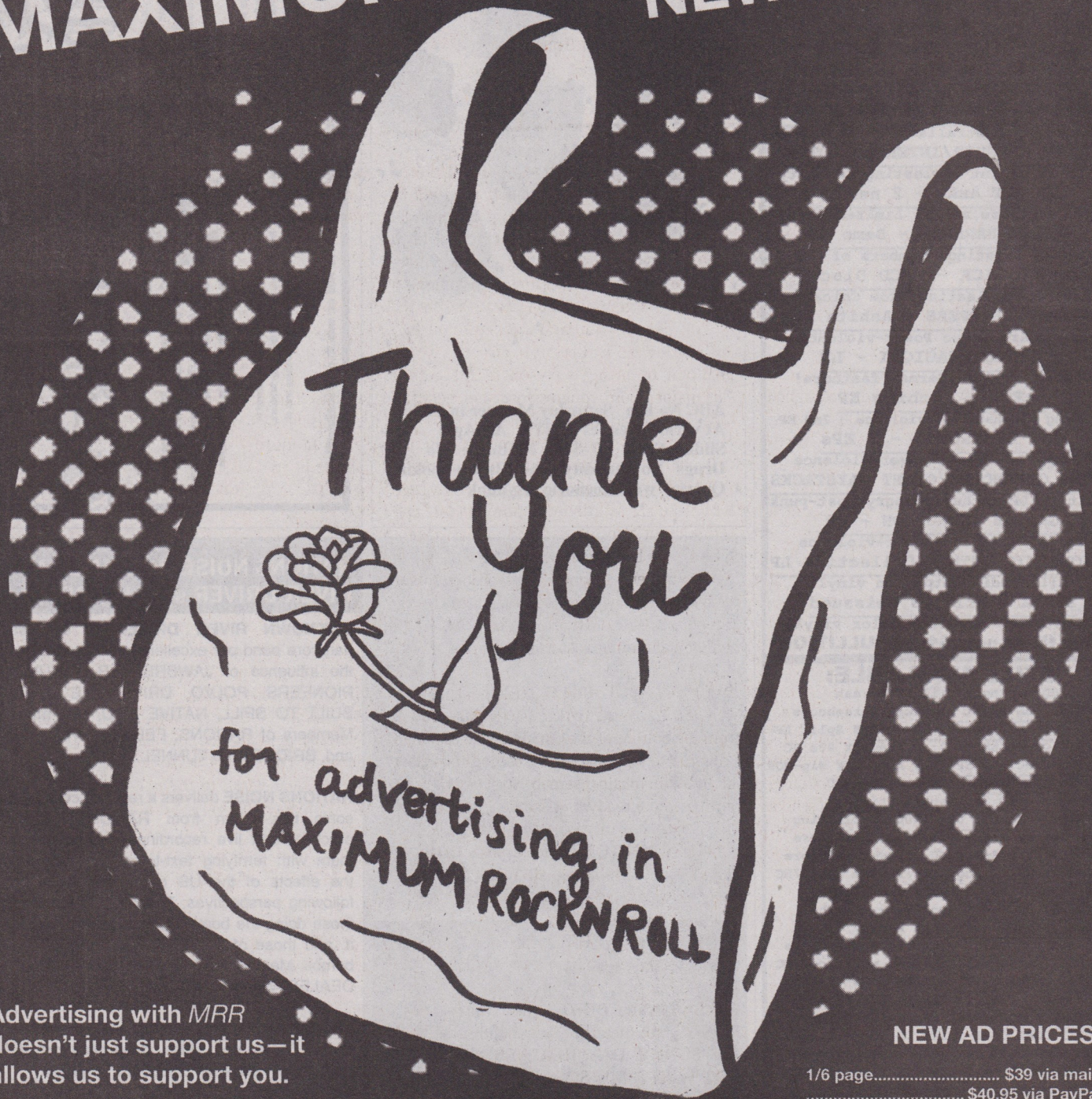

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DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(HB) Heather Blotto
(JR) Jason Ryan
(JS) Juan Santos
(MA) Matt Badenhop

BAKKARA – Guttural grind crust from the foggy and dark reaches of Portland, ME, filled with echo-effect vocals, lo-fi riffs, and muffled drums. Sounds like DISGUST meets NAPALM DEATH, or like isolated yeti-core, which often on the recording actually screams out in mythical terror, to my surprise of. The color scheme of the tape is impactful: teal, black, red insert and case, and purple / red cassette. A wild contrast to the very dissonant tunes. Comes with a beautifully designed mini-zine comic stapled into the tape sleeve. Very cool design with lots to look at, lyrics and drawings—especially the main character of the book, an Anarchist Kool-Aid Man who is a Molotov cocktail. (JR) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, bakkara.bandcamp.com)

BLINDING EYE DOG – *R'lyeh Wasn't Built in a Decade, Hon!* – Cheeky, tone-deaf punk from Baltimore that suffers from everysongsoundsthesameism. With song titles like "Feel the Bern," "Frankenhooker," "Bong of Cthulu," and "Cum on Aileen," I'm figuring it's better that there's no lyric sheet. Or I have no sense of humor? No, it's stupid. I do enjoy the comic art on the cover seemingly depicting the band as superheroes battling comic villian versions of the two asshole contenders in the 2016 presidential election. (MA) (16-song cassette, lyrics not included, blindingeyedog.bandcamp.com)

COSMIC HALITOSIS – *Where Is She?* – Dudes talking about their feelings in a way that is pretty insufferable, like does anyone really need to hear another song about a guy who wants to be a good person but is actually just "an asshole"? When the wanky guitar solo ends it goes straight into some decent midwest-style, high-energy, emotional snotty pop punk with a fun party vibe in the vein of GOODNIGHT LOVING. (HB) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, cosmichalitosis.bandcamp.com)

DUMP HIM – *Venus in Retrograde* – DUMP HIM describes themselves as gay pop punk from Massachusetts, but pop punk is such a wide category at this point that it's kind of useless as a descriptor. The songs are melodic and sophisticated, avoiding cliché, and keep it interesting in an almost '90s grunge / indie way. The lyrics and the feeling of the songs are intensely emotional, dealing with heartache, holding people you care about accountable, and healing from the inevitable but painful condition of being a person in the world. The major chord progressions and heartfelt vocal style warrant a comparison to THIS IS MY FIST. The recording sounds like one of those live recordings pulled off the sound board, where the instruments are muddy, and the vocals are a little too grating and a little too loud but also hesitant and inconsistent. I think if this band tours, everyone will fall in love with them. I hope I get a chance to see them before they blow up super hard in the pop punk scene. (HB) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, dumphim.bandcamp.com)

EAST BAY SOUP KITCHEN – Facepalm. Why did I grab the embarrassing CD-R stack from the bottom of the bin? Because as a man I deserve to be punished by having to review all the awful music that men unnecessarily shit out into the already shit-flooded shitosphere. So it's my job to report to you that EAST BAY SOUP KITCHEN released a CD-R of playful but humiliating alt rock, funk, and yes, a couple "punk" songs. You don't wanna hear it. I didn't even want to. Fuck the world. (MA) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, eastbaysoupkitchen.bandcamp.com)

FALSE CATHEDRALS – *No Map* – These Denver proto metal rockers sound something like SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE meets HOT WATER MUSIC, solo OZZY material, and MASTODON. Very melodic and proficient musicianship, and way more metal than I've compared them to, but just when I'm feeling it I get pulled back into an emo riff or lovely RUSH soliloquy. Very tight and rehearsed, which, for me, sounds a little too perfect. The vocalist sounds like a sweetheart, and though the messages are melancholy, the whole recording sounds very happy and optimistic. Definitely a feel-good listen with natural connection between members. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, falsecathedrals.bandcamp.com)

LAW OF THE NIGHT – *Cut From the Wrong Cloth* – Lo-fi, minimal bedroom drum-machine punk with a "what does it all mean?" theme. Lurching and dark, monotone and emotionless. Appropriately, I'm just sitting here staring out the window waiting for the rain to happen. You are invited to call them... (MA) (2-song cassette, lyrics included, (720) 663-8575)

LOSSES – *Wildest Dreams* – This six track EP will unleash your inner goth / '80s alter ego. You'll want to dance all night long while smoking cigarettes. James Thornton delivers dark lyrics with sharp, clear, and almost robotic sounding vocal work, which blends well with the upbeat, eerie synth-driven instrumentation. He speaks on fascism and police brutality, basically pointing out how shitty America has become. The closing track, "Cowards," talks about going back "to the good old days." If you enjoy synth pop while also having some harsh reality thrown at you, this is a must have! (JS) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, lossesmusic.bandcamp.com)

THE POINT BREEZE COUNTRY CLUB – Country-influenced indie rock that you can tell is from the city because it has a bit of a VELVET UNDERGROUND-playing-a-country-song vibe, but it doesn't matter because they're not even a little bit pretentious about it. The vocals are often whiney and off-key in a way that works, kind of like NEIL YOUNG or DEAD MOON, but without having much else in common with those influences. There is something very alive and human about this tape that reminds me of recordings from the late '90s SF scene surrounding HICKEY. Maybe drugs? Definitely worth checking out if you aren't

DEMOS

likely to be distracted and turned off by slide steel country solos. (HB) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, soundcloud.com/the-pb-country-club)

THE RARE FORMS – *Boneyard* – The RARE FORMS give me this '60s punk era feel that you'd find in some underground club. The guitar riffs in this are heavily inspired by blues / jazz with a hint of surf rock. The singer keeps the tone dark and sexy, making for an even more enjoyable listen. I feel like I'm caught in a trance. If this tape was a zodiac sign, it would be a Sagittarius: moody and mysterious! The rhythm section blends in well with the tight drumming, and the bluesy bass is a good match. Shout out to the artwork designer Becca Fumrman, as the cover definitely caught my attention. It's a great listen if you want to dance all night long with some strangers, and I'm excited for this band's future. (JS) (4-song casette, lyrics not included, therareforms.bandcamp.com)

REPTOIDES – I've long since reached the point where excessive chorus and delay effects are more commonplace than interesting. That being said, Monterrey's REPTOIDES have a disorienting and stress-inducing effect, which any righteous punk would argue is somewhat of a success. The guitars are buried in the mix but maybe it's because they're so hindered by effects. What we're left with is a hi-hat and echoed-vocals party with mutated sci-fi art. "Muerte a la humanidad!!" (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, worldgonemad.bigcartel.com)

RIP ROOM – *Monsters* – Self-described as "wound-up art punks," SF trio RIP ROOM's second full-length tape includes seven understated and groovy tracks. Heavy on the post-punk, even with some mathy moments, there's an underlying solid groove throughout the tape. It's minimalist but also somehow rocks, like WIRE. Precision and restraint build tension rather than predictability. Stoked to see what they come up with next! (HB) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, riproom.bandcamp.com)

THE SHEEN – *Trash Hazard* – Fistly, most tracks are over five minutes and contain little to no vocals. That means this is experimental improv jam stuff with some sax, drums, noise, guitars, and bass. The songs generally have some kind of idea or foundation, then they proceed to let the moment take them in order to deconstruct and shred it to pieces. Not my usual Sunday morning choice, but who doesn't love a challenge. (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, thesheen.bandcamp.com)

SINISTER PURPOSE – *Aces Low* – Southern rock-inspired punk from Richmond, VA, not without both hardcore influences (maybe a little COC) and stoner breakdowns. Fuzzed out guitars and that fat rock-production kick drum to prop up the massive low end. Songs about gamblin', racin', and numbin' the brain to escape the misery of the world. It's no ZEKE but it has its moments. (MA) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, sinisterpurpose.bandcamp.com)

SPECIAL MOVES – *July* – Olympia's melodic, lo-fi project SPECIAL MOVES has released a tape every month since January 2018. But even at that volume, the group doesn't sacrifice quality for quantity. The tracks come across as sincere and heartfelt, backed by a gentle but punchy drum machine beat. The melodies and endearingly imprecise vocal harmonies carry the songs with a posi, wholesome vibe. The tape loses some steam on the last track, which is just guitar and singing, but it also kind of sounds like one of those really poorly-recorded REPLACEMENTS songs, so it seems likely there's more song than meets the ear here. (HB) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com)

SUBVERSIVE OVERDRIVE – *Out of Time* – Sluggish dad-rock with awkward growly vocals and metallic guitar tone. Not for the punx. (MA) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, subversiveod.bandcamp.com)

SVART FRAMTID – *Live Blitz* – As you may or may not know, Norwegian hardcore punk from the '80s is one of my lifelong obsessions, so imagine my excitement to see this impossibly elusive live tape reissued! I tell people that the SVART FRAMTID EP is the best hardcore EP from the '80s, and while I can tell no one agrees with me, they dare not debate it! So, it's recorded at the legendary Blitz squat in Oslo on the 23rd of December, 1984. I know everything can be heard on the internet these days, but I'm a dickhead purist and not a big u-toob listener, and I never managed to score any kind of bootleg or tape trade of this...so now I'm hearing it for the first time! And...the sound quality is pretty bad! But for me that's okay because I get a little tease of the rest of one of my favorite bands' non-studio songs. With a little imagination I can apply my memorization of the EP's scathing production to what's here and aim for a nice fantasy (which would obviously be topped by someone turning up unheard studio recordings). D'you like hardcore but haven't checked out SVART FRAMTID? Or like Swedish (or Japanese or Finnish or Italian or South American or North American) hardcore but haven't heard SVART FRAMTID? Ditch whatever it is you're listening to and get familiar with their EP! Soak in the iconic sleeve art. Then once you're inevitably a full-blown fan and need to uncover more mystery, get this tape! Did I mention they sloppily cover "Dicks Hate the Police" on here? Did I mention that there's a photo in the layout of singer Gunnar's giant DISORDER tattoo across his back? Did you know that dude also has a FAITH tattoo, and a fucking upside-down cross tattooed on his forehead??! Hats off to Black Konflik for making this a reality. (MA) (17-song cassette, lyrics not included, Black Konflik, PO BOX 28, 27600 Raub, Pahang, Malaysia)

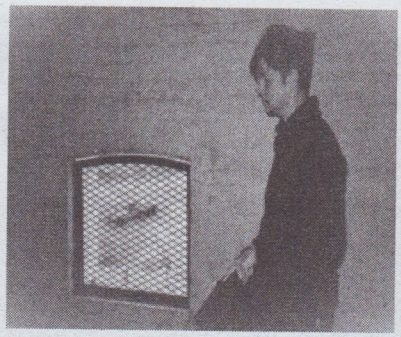
WASTE MAN – *A New Type of Worry* – Aggressive and spazzy art punk with screamin', noodly guitar solos and totally bangin' songwriting. They sound like real-ass freaks from the '70s inventing punk out of thin air, fueled by cognitive dissonance and the realization that there are no rules. This is so good! Of course it's from New Orleans! (HB) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, wastemannola.bandcamp.com)

YVES BERNARD – *Démo* – If you like TELEPHONE, RAMONES, RED DONS, and GARY NUMAN, you'll love this. Simple keyboards skip through with cheap garage rock drumming and smooth French vocals. The more I listen, also reminded of the LOW BUDGETS. Hypnotically catchy and repetitively anthemic, which works for me, because I do not speak the language of love. Oozing mid-tempo kewlness you can dance with your cats to. Love the '50s advert-style artwork, black line drawing with off register orange fills. Strong tape. (JR) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, objectifsetcompetences@gmail.com)

ZAD KOKAR & LES COMBI BEYAZ – Broken, rusty-sounding minimalist electronic music, but with a consistent beat and intelligible song structures. This band wears freaky homemade costumes and boxes on their heads. The singer talks, yells, shrieks, and freaks out amongst cool bird sounds and the mixture is then run through some pretty trippy effects. It's a real adventure, bringing me to a different plane of conscious, man. Escapist without being decadent. Nonsense, but still about something. A true Dada specimen right here in our own decade! (HB) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, petite-nature.bandcamp.com/)

Clevers

Said it's where I'm standing



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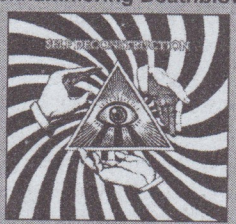

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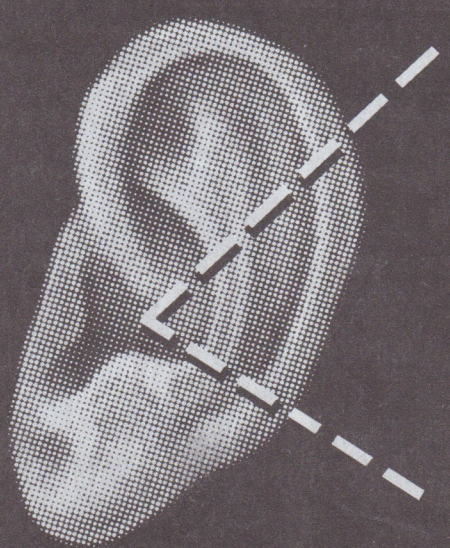

- Your band's name and contact info!
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- Give us some links!
- Tell us the date & location formed!
- How did your band come to be?
- Tell us what your lyrics are about!
- How do you describe your sound?
- List SOMETHING or SOMEONE you think folks need to listen to RIGHT NOW!
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